

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: JOHN RIEGGER
Sunday, August 25, 2013

DAVE SENKO: Well, John, congratulations. Before we get started, I just want to point out some facts that you guys will be interested in. He's the fifth rookie and the fifth first-time winner this year on the Tour, which ties the record for most rookies to win in a season. He's the second graduate of last year's Q School to win, joining Esteban Toledo. He gets a one-year exemptions into next year and a two-year exemption into the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai, \$300,000 check and 300 Charles Schwab Cup points, and you move to 31st on the money list now. With that, maybe just share your thoughts on the win.

JOHN RIEGGER: You know, this is going to go down as the best win of my career. I mean, it's been a long crazy career, I've been all over the world. I've had a little success on the PGA TOUR and European Tour and the Web.com Tour, but my game has actually gotten better over the last couple years and I'm just so thankful to be in the position that I'm in right now, and to get this win today, it will go down as the best win of my career.

Q. Which is better, the check or the exemption for a year?

JOHN RIEGGER: My wife will love the check and I'll love the exemption because now I know I'm going to be playing every week, I can kind of set a schedule and I think there's some good things that come for me. I'm not going to just sit back and relax and not work on my game. I've been working really hard and it showed today. I just hung in there today.

Q. You were holding steady, you saw all the champions behind you, Cook and Couples and Langer. I don't know if you saw the scoreboard but how did you hold on with all that pressure?

JOHN RIEGGER: Nobody can put pressure on you. I didn't look at the board. I asked Billy Ray Brown who works for the Golf Channel, I asked him going down the 15th fairway what the situation was, but the only person who can put pressure on you is yourself. I knew that these guys are great players. I mean, they've been great players their whole career and they still are. It's like I said yesterday, they beat me for 30 years, so I knew they were going to come out and throw some birdies on the board early, so that's why I wasn't going to look, I was just going to play my game. I knew if I played the way I was capable of playing, then things would take care of themselves.

Q. Did you know that Langer had taken the lead with his birdie on the 9th hole?

JOHN RIEGGER: Well, I was playing with him, so ... (laughter)

Q. At that point what's going through your mind? You had a two-shot lead beginning the day and now you're a shot behind. Did you have to regroup?

JOHN RIEGGER: No. Like I said, I knew that he was going to come out, or Tom or somebody else, but I was just trying to play my game, do what I was capable of doing, play the smart percentages and that's what I did all day long. I didn't really catch good numbers for iron shots and pins and stuff, it just kind of happened at the end of the round. I knew if I could just hang in there and he kind of made a few mistakes in the middle of the round, I think the 11th hole was a really key hole. He didn't hit a very good wedge shot, hit it in the bunker and made bogey. I hit it about a foot there, so that was a two-shot swing. So I kind of figured he was probably in the lead at that time, I didn't know for sure.

Q. At that point did you feel pretty good having the lead again by yourself? Did you feel much better after that?

JOHN RIEGGER: You know, I was very calm and composed all day long. Like I said, I just tried to play my game. I know what I'm capable of, how I'm capable of playing on a golf course like this. When you're playing with great players like Tom and Bernhard, they're not going to be intimidated by John Riegger, me stepping on the first tee with them. I just went about my own business.

Q. Why are you a better player now? You showed some signs in your 40s winning a couple times. Why are you a better player now in your 50s than you were in your 20s and 30s?

JOHN RIEGGER: Well, I'm healthy. Pretty much my whole career on the PGA TOUR I either played out of the Tour school category or the 126-150 category and I had finally become fully exempt and I broke my shoulder. So I've had two shoulder surgeries and a knee surgery over the last seven years, and a hand surgery, so finally, knock on wood, that all that's behind me.

Q. When you were at Q School, how likely did you think it was that a day like this would happen for you?

JOHN RIEGGER: It's kind of funny because, I mean, I watched a little bit of it last night on TV and they were talking on TV, you know, it was all about Langer and how tough it was going to be on me today. What they don't realize is I had to shoot 66 the last day just to get in a playoff at Tour school and there's a whole heck of a lot more pressure in that situation than trying to go up in the situation I was in today because if I didn't make that, I wouldn't have been here today. So, I mean, that helped me. Everything in my career's prepared me for this moment. Good friends of mine that have been playing the TOUR for a long time, they thought I should have won tournaments out on the regular TOUR. Why I didn't, I don't know, but I guess I'm just

a late bloomer.

Q. How many cigarettes do you usually go through in a round, and you changed shoes on the front nine?

JOHN RIEGGER: Well, I asked them to change the spikes on my shoes and they put the wrong ones in there and I slipped really bad on a wedge shot on the 4th hole, so that's when I called to have them bring out my other pair of shoes so I didn't want to be slipping all day.

Q. And cigarettes?

JOHN RIEGGER: I have no idea.

Q. How did you play 17 because that one shot after your (inaudible) on 15, where you stand (Inaudible).

JOHN RIEGGER: You know, I had a good number. I had a little bit too much club but the wind was into us a little bit and I knew if I just hit a good solid 5-iron that I was going to fly it maybe three quarters of the way back or to the back of the green, which on that hole, long is not going to hurt you. It really wasn't -- it was an intimidating shot but that's probably one of the better shots I hit all day.

Q. So you were going for the pin?

JOHN RIEGGER: Well, I wasn't going right at the pin but I was playing it right -- there's a ridge there in the middle of the green so you want to make sure you're on the left side of the ridge, and it just so happened that early in the round I wasn't getting very many good numbers and coming in I was getting a lot of good numbers, so that helped.

Q. Was there a concern in hitting the trap, if you were in the trap on 18?

JOHN RIEGGER: Yeah.

Q. Was there concern before you walked up to it about the line?

JOHN RIEGGER: No.

Q. Easy out?

JOHN RIEGGER: Yeah. I would rather have it where I had it yesterday where I had a 6-iron in instead of in the bunker. I kind of was a little out of rhythm today. It wasn't anything to do with -- I don't know if I was just a little tired or what or the situation, but I haven't been in this situation in a long time so I'm sure there had been some of that

involved, but I managed my game really well today.

Q. You have a veteran caddie, too. How helpful was your caddie?

JOHN RIEGGER: Pete's great. Pete and I played the PGA TOUR together for probably 13, 14 years, something like that. He's in the situation that I was in the last couple years, he's 49 and he's going to go to the qualifying tournament this fall also. There's a lot of great caddies. I mean, Terry that caddies for Bernhard is a great caddie, and Freddie Sanders that caddies for Kenny Perry and Andy that caddies for Tom, there's a lot of great caddies out here. But I feel like I have the best one because he's not really a caddie, he's another player, so it really helps when you're coming down the stretch like we were today.

Q. Did he make any golf suggestions that paid off?

JOHN RIEGGER: You know, we talked things over every shot and we were pretty much on the same page all day long. The only thing he kind of wanted me to play the shot a little different on 15 and I thought it was a lower percentage play to try to fly it up on top. Instead I took the low route and skipped it up there. He can hit those shots a little better than I can. My long game is my forte and his forte is he's been a great wedge player, great putter, drives it straight. But it helps to have somebody there that has been in that situation. He's lost playoffs out on the PGA TOUR.

Q. Does a win against your contemporaries as you put it, guys that have been beating you for 30 years, feel any different than say winning on the Nationwide Tour against guys maybe you don't know or have different priorities?

JOHN RIEGGER: Oh, absolutely. I mean, any time you beat these guys out here you've definitely accomplished something. Not to take anything away from the young kids I beat on the Web.com because Keegan Bradley was one of them, he's a major champion winner, and you've got Jason Day, he's a great player. There's so many good players no matter what Tour you're playing on these days.

Q. Just the fact that you had seen these guys so much, some of these guys on the Nationwide Tour --

JOHN RIEGGER: They're getting older and I'm the young one out here.

DAVE SENKO: Go through your birdies real quick, John. No. 3, do you remember shot sequence?

JOHN RIEGGER: I hit a drive down the right center of the fairway and I hit a 7-iron in there about 12 feet, made that putt.

DAVE SENKO: Bogeyed 7.

JOHN RIEGGER: 7, I hit it just perfect in the middle of the fairway and I don't know what happened, I was watching Bernhard and he hit his in the left rough and he hit it in the front bunker. I don't know if I just got lackadaisical there or what happened, then of course what do I do, I hit it right where he did so I didn't get it up and down.

Q. Was that a wedge?

JOHN RIEGGER: Yeah, a 60-degree wedge, probably the only bad shot I hit the whole tournament.

No. 11 I hit a really good drive down and I think I had 118 yards and I hit a sand wedge and hit it a foot.

15, I hit my drive, I was trying to take it down the right side and I pushed it a little bit in the rough and I laid it up, just kind of played a long pitch and run, I probably had 40 yards just the way the shot played. I think I hit it 12 feet there and made that.

16, I hit 3-wood off the tee and I was kind of between the sand wedge and pitching wedge and the wind came up and Pete dialed me in a good number there and I was fortunate and I hit it exactly the number he told me to hit it there and I hit it about 15 feet there and made that.

18, I was really trying to just crank one there and just got a little bit ahead of it and hit it in the right fairway bunker. You know, I looked yesterday coming up that, walking up to the 18th green because I knew where the pin was going to be that if something crazy happened and you hit it way left and short of the green that you had a perfect angle to pitch it back to that hole location. It was probably a pretty aggressive play, but I felt comfortable and I hit a 5-iron up short of the green and my pitch shot came out a little bit lower than what I was anticipating there, but got it up on top and basically was just trying to two-putt. I still went through my read and everything and got over it, felt good and I was just trying to cozy it down next to the hole and sometimes when you do that, sometimes they go in. I knew two foot from the hole that it was going in and it's like I almost couldn't believe it really. It was nice.

DAVE SENKO: How far was that putt?

JOHN RIEGGER: That putt there was 20 feet.

Q. (Inaudible)

JOHN RIEGGER: I was born on Friday the 13th, so 13 is my lucky number.

Q. Is your wife here today?

JOHN RIEGGER: No, she was not. My kids have school starting tomorrow. I wish they would have been, especially my little girl.

Q. How old is she?

JOHN RIEGGER: Seven.

Q. It will be a great Christmas.

JOHN RIEGGER: Oh, yeah. Christmas every day around my house.

DAVE SENKO: Everyone okay? Thanks, John.

JOHN RIEGGER: Thanks, guys.