

3rd ROUND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: GARY WOODLAND
Saturday, January 25, 2014

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: We're joined by 3rd round leader in the clubhouse Gary Woodland at 8-under par. Nice round today, 2-under par 70. On paper 70 doesn't look like such a great score but with the conditions out there and I heard a lot of U.S. Open mentions and things like that, talk about your round and overall your first 54 holes.

GARY WOODLAND: Yeah, I played beautifully today. I drove the ball well, really controlled the golf ball into the greens, which is huge. The rough is up, the greens are firm and fast, so it was nice to drive the ball in play and give myself a lot of chances. I hit a lot of greens. My putting was a little off today, I left myself a lot of testers out there, but I made some early and unfortunately I gave some back at the end, but all in all I played really well today.

Q. How many birdie holes compared to how quickly you can get in trouble out there given the conditions?

GARY WOODLAND: I think it's a little different. If I drive the ball in play, I have a lot of chances to make birdie. The par 5s I can get to all in 2. Today I drove the ball beautifully on the par 5s and I parred them all. I knocked it on the green twice and three-putted two of them. There are some shorter holes. No. 1, I think it's a pretty tough hole, I drove it and I had wedge in. There's some holes out there where I was playing with some other guys, I'm hitting shorter irons in than a lot of guys. So if I drive the ball in play, I'm playing a little different golf course than most guys are playing.

Q. Gary, with the way the course is playing and really not giving up much, when you wake up on Sunday morning in the position you're in, do you have to guard against that mentally to get into the round, or is there anything different when you're in the position you're in right now particularly when the course is playing this hard?

GARY WOODLAND: No, I have a game plan and my job is to execute. The people around me, we put a game plan together. We're playing very aggressive this week and all I have to do is execute. There's nothing different about Saturday morning or Sunday morning, I have to go out and play a good round of golf and hopefully it's enough on Sunday.

Q. How did you come to the aggressive game plan frame of mind this week?

GARY WOODLAND: One, I'm comfortable playing aggressively. I'm definitely

playing more aggressive than I have in the past, but on the other hand I'm playing a lot better than I have. I'm controlling the golf ball well. I feel very comfortable with the equipment I have and I'm playing right now. Callaway's worked hard to get me the right stuff and it's starting to show. I'm driving the ball as well as I've ever driven a golf ball. The iron play's always been there, it's just a matter of getting the ball in play and I'm doing that really well right now.

Q. Forgive me for not knowing or remember, but what positions were you in going into your other wins as far as going into Sunday?

GARY WOODLAND: Well, I was tied for the lead when I lost in the playoff in Palm Springs a couple years ago. I was two shots back when I won Transitions. I was leading Reno by quite a bit when I won there this past year. I was one shot back headed into Malaysia when I lost in a playoff.

Q. From a mental standpoint, how have you found being in the lead in those situations and has there been some kind of learning process?

GARY WOODLAND: I'm very comfortable in the position. I won, what did I win, four times in college. I was leading all four of those going into the final round. I know when I'm playing well I have a pretty good chance to win, and I'm playing really well right now. I have a great game plan, I feel comfortable on this golf course, it really sets up for my eye. Now I can just go out and feel comfortable and try to execute.

Q. When you win Reno and Malaysia, you were right there, and I believe there was another tournament recently you had a reasonable chance. When you're playing well and have a week like this, how much does it help to have those kind of positive experiences bunched up so quickly as opposed to just happen to have a good week?

GARY WOODLAND: A lot, I've been in this situation a lot. Barclays, I was one shot back going into Sunday; Malaysia, I was one shot back; Reno, I was leading by quite a bit. That's all in the last couple months. I'm comfortable, I know I'm playing well, I'm healthy and it's nice to have a golf course that sets up really well for me. I think length is a huge advantage on this place. I know I have a huge advantage which benefits me, so I've just got to go out and execute a game plan and hopefully roll some putts in.

Q. (No microphone.)

GARY WOODLAND: I could hit 3-wood into 9, but today I missed one and I laid up and I 4 iron and I had 60 yards. So I definitely could have got close today. Just with that front pin, I didn't want to mess with it. If I hit a good drive, I can definitely get home on 9, hit 3-wood in easily.

Q. Does the difficulty of this golf course make it any easier to protect the lead or does it make it in some ways more difficult to do that?

GARY WOODLAND: I don't think it matters, you've just got to go out and play a good round of golf tomorrow. I don't think you have to worry about somebody going super low, the golf course isn't giving up that right now, but you could definitely have someone shoot 3-, 4-, 5-under. Perez shot that the first round so it's definitely out there. I had opportunities today to post a pretty good number and I kind of let it get away, but I think if I go out and play well tomorrow, it should be pretty good.

Q. Pretty big difference between your 2012 and 2013 seasons. Is that just a product of being healthy again? When did the wrist kind of feel better?

GARY WOODLAND: Yeah, I was hurt all of 2012 and half of 2013. It's been a rough -- I've been out here since 2009, I've been injured a lot, which is -- I played a lot of sports in my life and never been injured and been playing a lot of golf and get injured. We put some time in this off season, I've lost some weight, got in the gym a little bit, got stronger, kind of took care of my weaknesses a little bit and I feel great. My body feels good. I'm as healthy as I've been since I've been out here since 2009, so it's nice to be healthy and nice to be able to play good golf.

Q. What's your reaction when you hear that Tiger Woods shot a 79?

GARY WOODLAND: Yeah, I just heard that. I mean it's out there. He just had obviously a rough day. You get going south on this golf course, you can definitely put up some numbers in a hurry. I don't think he's too concerned about it. I think he's still playing pretty good. He's still No. 1 in the world by a long margin. I'm sure he'll be back soon and be ready to go.

Q. You talked game plan a few times. Are you a game plan type of guy?

GARY WOODLAND: Yeah, that's from sports and that is just the mentality I have. I think that helps me block everything else out. If I can stick to what I'm supposed to be doing, it definitely helps me stay in the moment.

Q. You came to the game competitively fairly late because of the basketball. How much do you feel like not -- that you're not catching up necessarily, but you're still kind of growing into who you are as a golfer?

GARY WOODLAND: As a golfer, definitely. I was definitely behind. From a competitive standpoint, I think I was actually ahead. I've able to play other sports where you have to find ways to win when you're not playing your best golf or whatever sport you're playing. I was not playing my best yesterday and I found a way to hang in there and give myself a chance today. I think that's huge. Outside of that, from the golf standpoint I've surrounded myself right now with a lot of people that help

me in a lot of different ways and I think from a team aspect I can put myself in a pretty good position by the people I put around me to help me catch up on that margin that I lost by not playing golf at a young age.

Q. When you're coming up 18 today, Gary, that lie you had in that first cut sitting down significantly, watching your body language you didn't seem to get too down about that, just my opinion what I saw. What did you make of kind of maybe a positive attitude there?

GARY WOODLAND: Yeah, it was a tough lie. I really struggled out of the first cut all week. Numbers wise I only had 225 front, it was a perfect 4 iron to kind of turn it back in there. I ended up hitting 2 iron, I ended up taking two extra clubs and it just barely covered. It actually was a pretty good shot from where we were standing. I was just happy the ball wasn't in the thick stuff and, I mean, I had the chance to go for the green in 2. Unfortunately I three-putted, but I really executed that shot well.

I've just been really spinning it. With the irons out of that first cut, it's been very spinny all week and the first time we played for it and it worked.

JOEL SCHUCHMANN: Thank you very much, appreciate it.