

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: JAY HAAS
Wednesday, May 14, 2014



PHIL STAMBAUGH: We welcome Jay Haas into the interview room here at the 2014 Regions Tradition. Jay, you've been among the top five in four of the last five events. You're having a wonderful year. Just sort of talk about coming back for the first major championship of the year.

JAY HAAS: Well, I have played well from the very start of the year. I don't know, can't put a finger on it, but scores don't lie. I've hit good shots, I've been driving the ball well, hitting good irons, putting pretty well, and it's exciting to be coming into this tournament playing well. I'm looking forward to the week. I've always loved coming here. I didn't have great success in the two major tournaments that I played here on the PGA TOUR and haven't really torn it up in this event, but looking for a good week here and hopefully my good play will continue. It doesn't really suit my game in the sense of being 7,200 yards long or whatever. It's going to play long, I guess, with the rain now. The guys who have done well previously, generally speaking, Tom Lehman won twice here, David is probably not one of our longer hitters but certainly capable of getting it out there. So I'll have to play really well to contend, but I feel like I'm doing a lot of good things.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Can you maybe talk about the change in the year and why you're off to a good start compared to how you were playing at the end of last year?

JAY HAAS: Yeah, I think toward the end of last year I started to play a little bit better. I worked on a few things physically, just better alignment, a couple little tweaks in my swing, but not one thing, not like I've got a new driver or I changed my putting or anything like that. It's just kind of golfers, I think we all play in peaks and valleys and I'm kind of having a little resurgence right now. I think I realized at 60 years old that I don't know how many more peaks there will be in the future and glad that I'm having another one. Each time that I've played kind of poorly I wonder if that's kind of it, you know, am I not ever going to show up again. So to do this at age 60 is pretty gratifying and it just goes to show you that the old saying the ball doesn't know your name, if you hit a good shot it's a good shot no matter who you are, how old you are, young or old. The ball doesn't know that. If it's struck well and goes straight and goes at the pin and goes in the hole when you putt it, then that's the score you have. So I've been doing some good stuff. But nothing that I can really put my finger on that is glaringly better other than just kind of all facets of the game.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We'll go to questions.

Q. We're doing a fun little feature on golf fashion and I'm kind of curious about if you had kind of a style that you liked over the years and maybe how that's

changed also. And then any thoughts about who was known back in the day maybe as the stylish guy?

JAY HAAS: I would say I don't know that I have a style other than pretty conservative, I guess. I look at some of my say high school days with striped pants and checkerboard and all that stuff and kind of shake my head and wonder what the heck I was thinking about. But as we travel through the course of the year and you go three, four, five weeks at a time, you really can't have -- or five weeks, you can't have 35 different outfits. It's not even feasible to do that. You would have to take eight suitcases and all that. So a lot of whites and yellows and tans and blacks and blues and things like that, so that would maybe try to do my best work in a conservative way. I don't think -- I do own a white belt but it was given to me and I can't remember the last time I wore a white belt on the golf course in a tournament. That was probably back in the '70s or '80s sometimes.

Payne Stewart was obviously one of our guys that really was noticeable. I can recall seeing Payne in a practice round with khakis and a white shirt and a baseball cap on. You kind of looked, Who's that over there? Then you see the swing and think, Oh, my gosh, that's Payne.

I talk to different people. J.C. Snead, he wore a straw hat like his uncle Sam. He said, It drove me crazy, if I didn't wear my hat they would say not great playing, J.C., they would say where's your hat?

So if you're going to take this route, knickers or whatever it might be, you'd better embrace it and run with it or suffer the consequences, I guess. Lanny Wadkins, he was always a sharp dresser. Ben Crenshaw was always a sharp dresser. Tom Weiskopf I think Jack, all the great players. Very few of them that looked rumped. They usually put a pretty good forward in that regard. I would say right off the top of my head Payne was the guy who distinguished himself. Doug Sanders, but that's maybe kind of even before my time, certainly before yours.

Q. You mentioned, of course, that you had your struggles here on this course. What, if anything, can you do or have you looked to do to have a better showing this time here?

JAY HAAS: I look back on some of the holes that have given me trouble over the years and try to focus on those. It's not like I try harder, it's just maybe a different approach, whether it be off the tee, being more aggressive off the tee, laid back off the tee, whatever it might be, but try to learn from my mistakes in the past. I know club selection on certain holes. The fourth hole here to me is one of our hardest holes. It would be a hard hole on any golf course, pretty tough green. It requires a pretty good elevation coming into the green to stop it on the green. I don't hit the ball very high, so somehow I've got to either take more club and try to hit a high cut in there or something like that. That's just the type of shot that maybe I need some

extra care with. But also just need to take advantage of the scoring holes. Say when I have a wedge or sand wedge or an 8-iron in my hand, I've got to be more precise and take advantage of those opportunities. I think this is -- it pays to really drive the ball well here. You've got to put it in the fairway. There's not a great deal of rough but there's enough rough and the greens are small enough that playing out of the rough too many times just doesn't lead to good scores. So driving the ball is very important to me here. And play better. Bottom line in all conversations about golf, play better.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Anything else for Jay? Jay, good luck this week.

JAY HAAS: Thank you all very much.