

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:
TOM WATSON & ANDY NORTH
Thursday, June 5, 2014**



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Okay. We welcome Tom Watson and Andy North into the interview room here at the Big Cedar Lodge Legends of Golf, the 2008 champions and you won several other divisions as well together. Andy, you won with two different partners in this event. Just an opening comment from each of you about being here at a pretty unique place for this event. Andy, do you want to start us?

ANDY NORTH: Sure, I would love to. I think first of all the fact that Bass Pro Shops has jumped on board and gotten so involved so quickly is really a pleasure. They're going to be a great partner not only for us as old golfers but for golf in general. And to come here not having any idea -- Tom at least had a clue what to expect coming here -- I've been totally blown away. Unbelievable facility, the beauty, the commitment from all the people involved in this tournament. Then to have the opportunity to play a par 3 golf course and maybe this could be a watershed event. This could be the changing of how we look at golf. And the fact that it's a fantastic par 3 and we're going to play some alternate shot, which could be very interesting.

TOM WATSON: I'll keep it out of the water if you keep it out of the water.

ANDY NORTH: I'm more confident in you than me. But it's going to be a lot of fun. Just to get this opportunity to continue this fantastic golf tournament. This is the tournament that got this tour started. To be able to go play with one of your buddies and no matter how old you get, to still have that opportunity to go out and play once in a while is really great and we really appreciate everything Johnny Morris and his people have done.

TOM WATSON: You know, the Legends, it's the oldest tournament on our Senior Tour, Champions Tour starting back in the late '70s at Onion Creek, is that correct, in Texas, and it went to Savannah, now it's here. To continue on with the oldest tournament, we really thank Johnny for stepping up to the plate. The tour, they were struggling -- this is quite an undertaking to put this thing on logistically with what you need to do, and what you need to do is you need to celebrate the older players. The older players need to play and let them have a chance to play their one time a year or couple times a year that they still play. It's great for Andy and me to be able to see these guys and be able to talk to them, see them again, because when we grew up on the tour these were the stars and we were just the up-and-comers. Now we have a chance to watch these players, just say hello, say how ya doing and relive some of the old stories, hear some new stories from these guys. That's part of what the Legends of Golf tournament is all about.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Before we go to questions, just anything about strategy with

this being sort of a unique format?

TOM WATSON: Go low.

ANDY NORTH: Well, as long as he hits it about four feet from the hole every time he hits it, everything will be just fine. The beauty of this event, Tom has really been playing some spectacular golf of late, which is always nice to come in here playing well. I have not played a lot of golf but it's always exciting to get in the mix of it. Generally you probably play a little bit better when you're playing with somebody who knows what he's doing. We're going to have a lot of fun.

TOM WATSON: One of the things about being partners, the older you get, and especially in my case, the more difficult it is to read putts. I'm out there with my amateurs yesterday, I'm trying to read there putts for them as I always do in the pro-ams and I'm not doing very well. I can't wait to have somebody say, Okay, Watson, you're way off here, it's an eight-inch break, it's not a two-inch break here. So you get a little more confidence in your line, but that's part of the thing.

The other thing about this whole event and you can't stress it enough, we're playing a par 3 course for the very first time in an official PGA TOUR tournament. There are lots of par 3s around the country. In fact, when I build golf courses, what I do for the driving range is I build nine greens and build short flat tees so if they want to close the driving range down, they can play a short par 3. That gives people a chance who can't hit the ball very far a little fun, a little chance to play.

What we need in this country in golf, golf needs a place where people don't have to go and spend a lot of time playing. When you play a par 3, you don't spend a lot of time on a par 3. With par 4s and par 5s, it takes a while to get there, hit shots, find your ball. Par 3s are great because when you play a par 3, almost any player can have a chance for a birdie at least one time in a round of golf. They just get on the green once, you've got a birdie putt. You play a regulation golf course and they play four par 3s and you never have a chance to get on those par 3s, and all par 4s and par 5s you can't get on and you never have a chance for a birdie but par 3s you do. So I think that is one of the things that I think you'll see more of. There are par 3s in this country that you don't hear much about. Actually, Phil, you ought to Google it and find out how many par 3s there are, par 3 golf courses there are in this country. There are a lot more than we really think there are.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: I'm going to do that when this is over. Okay, anybody got questions, just raise your hand.

Q. I would like to ask Tom Watson, what do you think Johnny stepping up here in this part of the world, what it means to this becoming a golf destination. It's never really been a golf destination in Branson. Do you think this could really change its personality?

TOM WATSON: Well, I think you may be mistaken there as far as the golf destination. I think there's a lot of golf here in and around Branson, there really is. It's going to illuminate the fact that there is golf around here.

I know what Johnny's doing in the sense he's a great marketer. He understands that you get people to come here and have fun no matter what they're doing, hunting, fishing, playing golf, being outdoors. Talking about it last night, if you get the kids up early in the morning, go camping outdoors, they're tired by 9:30, they're asleep, so they're not thinking about going out and spending any time later than 9:30. They're in bed. That's the way I've always lived my life. I can't stay up beyond about -- never could stay up beyond 11:00, 12:00 at night, never. Now it's about 9:30.

The outdoor activities, I've always been an outdoor guy. I've hunted, fished, I've camped out. The White River is a perfect example. I've been down the White River a number of times in my life, I love the float trips down there. This area here, the natural beauty here, it needs to be shown and what a better platform. There's no better platform to be able to show it from the Top of the Rock. The look over Table Rock Lake, surrounding areas, it's spectacular. If we get rid of this rain, we'll be able to see it on TV.

Q. How competitive do you guys still feel on the golf course once you tee it up for real on Friday?

ANDY NORTH: I think we get very competitive. Sometimes your body won't let you do what your mind thinks it should be able to do, but I think that all of us who have played this game for a living at some point in time or another, once you tee it up on Thursday morning or Friday morning, whatever it might be, you know, the adrenaline gets going even though you haven't been there maybe in a year or six months. You jump right back into it.

TOM WATSON: You don't forget.

ANDY NORTH: At least something stirs inside you, you know? That's nice to have that happen. We still love, all of us still love the competition part of it and that's what made this group of players here legends not only in title but in reality. There's something in all these guys that you stir it up a little bit and you're going to probably get something pretty good.

Q. Andy, I wanted to ask you, I know you just had your charity event on a par 3, you've been having it for several years. Do you think that has anything to do with some of these events with actually this event coming about and maybe the importance of you two working with John Morris to get this event on a par 3?

ANDY NORTH: Well, I think Tom probably was much more involved. We've been

always big spokesmen for when it was Liberty Mutual and now Bass Pro that Tom was kind enough --

TOM WATSON: Big Cedar.

ANDY NORTH: Big Cedar, that's right. Tom was kind enough to play with me in a lower division instead of the individual tournament.

TOM WATSON: What do you mean kind enough? We were making a statement. I'm going to interrupt him because when this tournament first started, it was a team event. Team, team, team, team. And then for some odd reason they decided, well, let's make it an individual tournament. Well, it lost all its flavor. It just lost all its flavor. You want to come and play with your buddies. And plus, it's a different format that people normally play golf. They play golf where you pair up in a four-ball, two versus two and you go play. So we made a statement, we said we're going to play in the Raphael division, which is a team event that they had during the individual event for the other players who want to play individual.

ANDY NORTH: The statement you make.

TOM WATSON: We made a statement. We won it three years in a row and we finally convinced -- there was a lot of talk and we convinced the Liberty Mutual sponsor and the tour to change it back to the team event, which it always should have been. And then we won it that year. Of course, Andy's won it with, what, Colbert twice?

ANDY NORTH: Two times with Colbert.

TOM WATSON: This has been an annuity for you.

ANDY NORTH: This is about half of my official winnings.

Q. You said there are a lot of par 3s out there, a surprising number, but what is it about Top of the Rock that stands out?

TOM WATSON: Well, the variety of holes that you play at Top of the Rock, you have a variety of shots and the beauty of it. I mean, Johnny likes rocks, he really likes rocks. I know for a fact when I was here working on the Himalayas putting green over here, this big putting green which has 18 feet of fall from the top to the bottom, I went out on a horse and I saw Johnny -- basically saw the guys working around the edges of the lakes. This rock right here, Johnny wanted to place this rock just about 10 feet over here. It was too close to the front edge, he wanted to move it like that and they were up there with a backhoe moving these rocks and getting it done. He was very much hands-on in the look of this golf course.

You know, just the trail coming in here. I don't know if you've taken the trail in the cart coming in from the parking lot up there by the main road. You've got to take that trail, it's spectacular. You come by cart, you go by what this lake was named after, Table Rock, so outcroppings of the tables of the sedimentary rock that built up in levels and it's the reason this lake was called Table Rock because of the formations here. And you go through this magnificent cave which was chock full of a bunch of (indiscernible.) They went in there and they excavated that out and made it into restaurants and just a path that goes through there. It's just spectacular way of entering into this facility. I mean, the vision that you had to do this and of course the wherewithal to do it. The money to say this is the way I would like to have people treated when they come here, that's what Johnny's all about. How are people treated when they get here. They're treated to a unique experience or series of experiences here that you don't find anywhere else.

ANDY NORTH: And this whole event is going to be spectacular on TV. I think that's what's going to be so interesting. Any direction the camera goes is going to be spectacular and we don't find that very often. The nine holes are extremely challenging. You're going to have some shots over 200 yards, you've got some little ones like going down to the second hole, which are very difficult because there's so much elevation change. It's going to be a very challenging nine holes, but from a visual standpoint I think the viewer at home is going to have an awful lot of fun watching this event unfold.

TOM WATSON: Plus we've got the other thing, the alternate shot. That's never been played officially in any PGA TOUR tournament. It is in the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup, but for official money for the Champions Tour, no, it's never happened before.

ANDY NORTH: There may be some friendships lost.

Q. Tom, you talked about so many guys that you grew up watching on TV. A guy like Gary Player, can you explain what he's meant to the game of golf worldwide?

TOM WATSON: First of all, he doesn't look 80. He doesn't even look 60. When you saw him naked in SI, actually it wasn't too bad. I'm not one of those guys. His body was in great shape. I mean, and he prides himself obviously for keeping himself fit, active, working out. That says a lot for his lifestyle and that blends in with the lifestyle that we're trying -- I think America is trying to promote now with our obesity problem in America. We're trying to say, all right, we're not taking care of our bodies the way we should, and Gary's been a great spokesman for that and I applaud him for that.

Q. Tom, you won the 1970 Amateur at Twin Oaks at Springfield. Do you have any memories of that?

TOM WATSON: Yeah, playing Frisbee with Payne Stewart when he was 11 years old or 14, I can't remember. But Bill Stewart, he was a good friend of my dad's. They shared two loves, one was first and foremost golf and the other was insurance. They both were insurance salesmen. I played some golf with Bill growing up and I finally played in a competition and beat him in the Missouri Amateur. When we were here in Springfield in '70 he invited me over to the house and had dinner and went over there and met Payne for the first time. We had some hamburgers on the grill and after it was all over, throwing the Frisbee around. We probably threw it around for about an hour. It was a lot of fun. That was the first time I met Payne and really didn't get together with him until after he got on tour after that. He went to SMU and then joined the tour and came out on the tour and saw him then. One thing, the apple didn't fall too far from the tree with Payne and his dad. Payne always had a very upright position with his hands putting, close to him like that, and that was the trademark for Bill, his dad. His hands were really high and close to his body like that so nothing moved except that. I'm going to try that tomorrow, got to try something.

ANDY NORTH: I trust you.

TOM WATSON: Feels like a snake in my hands right now.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Gentlemen, thank you very much and good luck this year.