

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: KENNY PERRY
Wednesday, June 25, 2014

DAVE SENKO: Well, we'd like to welcome Kenny Perry, winner of the 2013 Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS Championship. Kenny, maybe just get us started, talk about coming back here as defending champion where last year this event kind of kicked off a great run for you which culminated with the Charles Schwab Cup and the Champions Tour Player of the Year.

KENNY PERRY: Well, you know, it was a great victory for me. I got the monkey off my back and put a major title next to my name, and it really kind of just set the stage for my summer and for the ability to win the Charles Schwab Cup. Got into one of my little zones to where I started shooting low rounds and I think I shot like 63-63-64 here the last three rounds to win this tournament and overtake Fred Couples on Sunday. It just made me a more confident player, made me feel like I finally did it, and my response was maybe the floodgates open and I'll start winning more and sure enough two weeks later I win the U.S. Senior Open and then win -- I won the Regions earlier this year to put three majors by my name. So it's been a great start, it's been a great season, a great two summers here. Looking forward to defending this week. Played a practice round yesterday, the golf course is immaculate. I don't see it shooting those kind of scores this week because as y'all know last year we played ball in hand, serious rain. There was rivers running down those fairways. Looks like to me the forecast is going to be good the next three days so the golf course will firm up and play like it's supposed to play. It's a great test. It's one of my favorite courses to ever get to play. I enjoy playing it. I just like the beauty of it, the sight lines of it, and just looking forward to the opportunity to try to go back to back.

DAVE SENKO: How is the state of your game right now? I know you've had a busy run here, including the U.S. Open a couple weeks ago and then Chicago last week.

KENNY PERRY: Yeah, this is my eighth week out of nine. Played four in a row, took a week off and this is the fourth of four in a row again with the U.S. Open kind of mixed in there and the PLAYERS in Jacksonville, so a couple of PGA events. But it's been great. I won't have this opportunity ever again probably and so I'm enjoying the run, enjoying the ride and looking forward to, you know, getting out there.

And my game's in good shape. I played a nice practice round yesterday. This is a driver's golf course. I noticed the rough is very penal this year. If you hit it in the rough, you're not going to get it on the greens. And the guy who's going to win this week is going to have to drive the ball spectacular. I drove it beautifully yesterday. I need to carry that over into tomorrow's round and then I need my putter to wake back up again. With good driving and good putting, good things happen.

DAVE SENKO: I know you talked about before with the whole thing with your driver breaking last year. Are you still comfortable with the new driver?

KENNY PERRY: I've kind of gone through a whole bunch, been through probably 10 drivers and I've got a driver now I hit fairly straight. It's not as long as the one -- it doesn't have the pop in it like my other one had, but it's pretty accurate, it's pretty straight, and to me I still hit it far enough so I should -- it's okay, it will work.

DAVE SENKO: Questions?

Q. Kenny, first, what was the old driver, what was the make, and what's the new one?

KENNY PERRY: Same head. It was a TaylorMade -- I'm sorry, it was Adams LS. It was last year's model, it was the white one. They've gone to the XTD this year. They destroyed the shaft, the head and everything. I mean, the club was destroyed. So I had to start over. And it's funny, I've probably built 15 identical same shafts, same head, same loft. Not the exact same head but they're all -- and none of them hit the same. I don't know what the deal is with it, I don't understand that. But I started experimenting with different shafts, so now I've got a different shaft in this one and it fits me better, let's put it that way. My trajectory came back, my draw came back. I knew it was a good driver. The Tradition I won on Sunday, I had a one-shot lead coming to 18 and I just drilled one right down the middle, so to me that told me more about that driver than anything.

Q. When you won here to kind of kickstart everything, what got you going? Was it more a sense of relief that you won one, the confidence from winning one, and/or just pure ball striking and playing well?

KENNY PERRY: I just think it was my time. My whole career's always been based on streaks. When I get hot on the PGA TOUR, I won multiple times and a lot of times. It's just funny how my game is, it runs in cycles and it just happened all of a sudden. Nothing really clicked in that said I was going to shoot 63-63. I shot 63 on Friday and that just kind of sparked my interest a little bit. And normally it's hard to back up a really low round with another one and to put three in a row, but still we had circumstances, ball in hand. It's nice when you can kind of tee it up if you miss a green and you're still in a fairway and you can kind of give yourself a good little lie so that really helped those scores. Then I was able to carry it over to the Senior Open and I played great at the Senior Open. Very tough golf course, very hot, very hilly. Drove the ball outstanding and then I putted great again and that just bred confidence into that week. My putter woke up and whatever I was doing and it stayed with me. What I was thinking, my approach to the game at the time, it all worked and it was just -- I guess it was good coaching, I guess.

Q. Kenny, you just mentioned, is your putter asleep at the moment? You said

you need your putter to wake back up again?

KENNY PERRY: Always. I'm just an average putter, always have been. I finished sixth last week in Chicago but I was three-putting twice a round and my speed would be off on one and then it would be perfect on the next. That's stuff I don't understand. I don't know if it's my vision, I don't know if I can't see the green, the slope, whatever. I started playing in glasses this year, I don't know if that's a difference. I wore contacts last year. I've had Lasix done twice. My vision's still pretty poor and I was always in a lot of pain in my contacts, so I said I was done with contacts and I'm thinking about having this ablative surgery in November where they don't cut a flap, they scuff up your cornea and then it heals. It's very similar to cutting a flap. I'm thinking about doing that in November and getting rid of the glasses again. My vision's been okay but I don't know if that's causing part of my putting problems. I've always had poor vision my whole life, I don't know if that's it or not. When I do get hot, I make lots of putts and I make lots of birdies. It's not my vision then, it's still all the same vision, I don't understand it.

Q. Can you just talk about the (inaudible.) Can you tell when it's coming, can you tell when you're on the verge of --

KENNY PERRY: Definitely.

Q. What does it feel like?

KENNY PERRY: It feels good. (Laughter.) How do you tell an athlete when he's in the zone? There's that fine line between shooting 71 and shooting 68, or a round that should have been 75 and you saved it to shoot 70. There's just a fine line there. I think a lot of it's confidence. Your iron game is good at the time, you're driving it good, it all kind of feeds on itself for me. It's kind of a total package deal. When I'm shooting low rounds, I'm doing well in every category. I'm even chipping well, and chipping and putting has always been my downfall.

Q. Last time we spoke you hadn't received word from PGA of America yet about Valhalla. The word finally came. Obviously you were thinking about it, but now that it's a reality, it's going to be a big summer for you?

KENNY PERRY: Awesome, what a way to go out. Most athletes who have a long career, you don't get to say goodbye the way you want to say goodbye. When your career's over, it's over.

For me to go back to Valhalla, to go back to a golf course I've had a lot of history with and a lot of disappointments and a lot of triumphs and to be able to go back there and just to say thank you to Ted Bishop and the PGA, but to say thank you to the state of Kentucky. I'll have -- I don't know how many tickets I'll have to get that week. I'll have a lot of family, friends and I'll get to say bye to all the people who supported me for

the past 30 years on the PGA TOUR, just to say thank you. So to me it's just a dream.

Q. Was the disappointment greater or was it the triumph of the Ryder Cup?

KENNY PERRY: I think they were on both ends of the spectrum. The disappointment was the lowest of the lows and the win was the highest of the highs. To have my dad there at the Ryder Cup, emotional time as a family, a father-son to have that. And then to have the tournament won, you know, all I had to do was par the 18th hole and it's mine just the same way I did the Masters, all I had to do was par the last hole and I couldn't get it done in either situation. Very low moments in my golfing career, but still the support I got afterwards from the fans and from the people was unbelievable.

Q. Do you have any thought or idea what it's going to be like on the first tee on Thursday at the PGA?

KENNY PERRY: I'll be very nervous. I'm sure it will be pretty loud. I'm sure there will be a lot of applause, I hope. Maybe I'm wrong. I definitely will feel the love of Kentucky, I'll definitely feel it the whole week. It kind of reminds me of Tom Watson, when you see Tom Watson maybe at a major or something when he was trying to win the British, you just feel the love of everybody wanting him to win. It will be kind of similar to that, I think.

Q. Talk a little bit about I guess as far as how you maintain and deal with the pace of the schedule and, like you said, I think eight tournaments in nine weeks, what do you do to stay on top of your game?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I haven't been practicing as much as I normally do. I usually put a lot of time in hitting balls and stuff. I knew I was going to be on this long run. I'm trying to pace myself, I guess is the word, and not overdo it. Obviously here at 53 I don't have the energy I did when I was 30 and so I need to pay attention more to what I'm excelling and what I'm not doing very well at and just work a little bit more on the things I think I need to work on and hopefully that's good enough to get me through these weeks. And I've played okay. I did tell my wife last night that I'm very tired. I'm ready for some time off, some down time and not worrying about trying to make three-footers or shooting low scores and winning golf tournaments. I'm ready to get away, hang out with my grandkids and just kind of get away, refresh and recharge the batteries, I guess you would say, a little bit and hopefully come back out ready to go.

Q. And also talk a little bit about Fox Chapel; this is your third year here and the fans and just being here.

KENNY PERRY: I love it. Great sports town. I always go to the ballgame. I'm going

to go Friday night to -- I went last year to one of the baseball games. Great stadium. You know, when you think about the Steelers, you think about the Pirates, the Penguins, tremendous sports town. They're very boisterous and they get behind you and I like coming here.

This is a Seth Raynor golf course, it's one of my favorites. Fun to play, very difficult. There's a lot of tiering on the greens. You've got to be very precise with your irons but you can actually get at this golf course if you drive it long and straight and I've got an advantage here if I hit my driver well. So to me I perk up a little bit when I feel like I've got a little bit of an advantage. Looking forward to it. It's just a fun week, it really is a fun week. It's a fun week as a fan, fun week to see everyone again, shake hands, everybody's congratulating me, you see your face on the ticket. It's pretty cool.

Q. Kenny, one quick question, I think you had your hole-in-one at 17 with the pin up, correct?

KENNY PERRY: Correct.

Q. Do you prefer the pin up or on the back part of the swale?

KENNY PERRY: It's definitely a very difficult hole when it's in the back because it's 220-plus yards no matter what. I'm going to have to hit some kind of hybrid in there. When the pin's in the front it's a 6-iron. To me, I made the hole-in-one two years ago, and then last year I hit it to within two feet of it on Sunday to make birdie to really kind of close the deal out.

Q. It was back pin?

KENNY PERRY: No, it was front on Sunday, which kind of shocked me but I think all the rain and the elevation of the green (inaudible) in the front part of the green because the green kind of slopes away from you and goes into the half pipe and then to the back. You know, I like the front pin. They can put it a little left, too, because it kind of helps my draw, so I kind of like that.

DAVE SENKO: Thank you, Kenny.

KENNY PERRY: Thank you all.