



ROUND 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: MARK BROOKS

Friday, August 22, 2014

DAVE SENKO: Mark, thanks for joining us, 7-under 65 including a 6-under 30 on your start, your back nine. Just some thoughts on your round, and then six birdies and an eagle and just the one bogey at No. 3.

MARK BROOKS: Yep. You know, I didn't hit it that great but kind of kept it in play and I putted good generally. I mean, I missed -- obviously we all miss putts. I probably had a couple of -- the front nine, my back nine, I didn't play particularly well that nine. I made -- it's easier to go through it for me, but two good shots and made about a six-, seven-footer on 10. Then 11 I made it from just off the front of the green, so it was probably about 20 feet. Then I hit a bad second shot on 12 into the right greenside bunker and holed it out. I hit a really good bunker shot so I was going to make a 4 and it fell in.

DAVE SENKO: How far was that?

MARK BROOKS: I had a couple of those. Oh, I don't know, probably 60-foot bunker shot. But it wasn't a great place and I hit a really good bunker shot that was going to stop a foot so I was happy I was making 4, and then it fell in the hole.

DAVE SENKO: 16?

MARK BROOKS: A couple decent saves. 16, I hit two good shots and made about an eight-footer there.

DAVE SENKO: 18?

MARK BROOKS: Hit an okay drive and hit a 3-wood that luckily rolled up there about five feet. It was one of those deals, it ran out of gas at the right time and wasn't a real difficult putt. And then on 3 I drove it in the fairway bunker and put it in the greenside bunker and I didn't hit a great bunker shot and missed probably an eight-, 10-footer. Then the next hole I made about a 30-footer that fell in last roll drunk. Again I was just happy I hit a good putt down there, was going to have a tap-in and just last minute fell in.

DAVE SENKO: No. 2?

MARK BROOKS: No. 2, kind of a so-so second shot into the right fringe and probably an 18-footer because that pin was four off the right, so it was probably 15, 18 feet, big breaker, another kind of lucky deal. But hit a good putt that again was

going to be a foot and that one went in, so those two were kind of a big deal.

DAVE SENKO: What saves?

MARK BROOKS: I made a few five-footers rolling around in there. You know, 13, or the par 3. Then 15, the par 5, I hit a really bad third shot and had to make a five-footer coming back, so it was kind of one of those deals. No. 17, I hit a bad putt from the fringe, made a good five-, six-footer there. So my front nine I didn't leave any out there at all and probably had two or three that went in that didn't have to, especially the bunker shot. But as I said to her walking in, when you do it as long as I have or a lot of us have, I in particular have played a lot, you deserve occasionally to have a nine like that. So it's not totally shocking but it feels good to watch them go in.

DAVE SENKO: Questions?

Q. Sounds like something took over for your game. You said a lot of your shots looked like well, just wanted to get it close and it fell in?

MARK BROOKS: Well, when you're 30 feet, 40 feet, whatever you are, I mean these greens are kind of tricky I think. It's easy to misjudge speed. I mean you can play perfect golf around here and end up shooting even, a couple under and you can play kind of scrappy and birdie the right holes, get the ball in the right places a few times and next thing you know you're shooting 3-, 4-, 5-under and may not feel like you played that great. It's an awkward course for me that way.

Q. You've played really well in the majors.

MARK BROOKS: Yeah, I mean, I had my knee worked on last year and it kind of took longer to become mine again. It wasn't a replacement or anything but one of those deals I probably favored it quite a bit and I didn't mean to.

Q. So you're more healthy this year?

MARK BROOKS: Yeah, I'm able to get on my left side better this year. It was the left knee. I've had back issues but like a lot of guys, you know, a lot of guys, like the bulged disk, the whole bit. I've managed it very well. I've never had surgery, I've managed it very well. I've had it almost 15 years. It takes management. A lot of these guys, they overdo it. But barring that deal that I've dealt with and it causes swing problems for sure. It started in 2000 and I probably had four, five, six years dealing with it, figuring out how to deal with it, I guess that would be number one. Once I figured out how to deal with it, I've had a good 10-year run with very little issue. I have a significant bulge but I've managed it very well. I think it's healed at times.

Q. Do you feel as good right now as you have in quite a while then?

MARK BROOKS: Oh, yeah. Then of course the knee thing pops up out of the blue. I actually was hitting a shot. I had a really funky lie and I tried to hit it too hard, and within two holes I knew something was bad. I only had four or five holes left in that round. It was amazing I finished because I got in the car and drove like 30 miles, got out to go get a Coke or something at a convenient store, I couldn't even walk in the store. I said something to my caddie when I did it going to the next hole. I putted out, I actually got it on the green, putted out. Going to the next par 3 tee and I said, man, my knee feels funny. I didn't know what it was. No pain, nothing, and next thing you know, that was Sunday, they were cutting on me Tuesday morning. It was a miracle I played the last four holes basically without hurting it.

DAVE SENKO: What tournament was that at?

MARK BROOKS: It was early in the year, like Mississippi or something.

DAVE SENKO: Last year?

MARK BROOKS: Yeah.

DAVE SENKO: What did they do surgery wise?

MARK BROOKS: Lot of cleanout, meniscus and MCL repair.

Q. When was the last time you shot 30 on the front nine?

MARK BROOKS: I don't know. At home, or similar scores. That's obviously the biggest turnaround just feeling better. You know, driving it in play, making a few more putts, you know. But I mean to answer why the majors, because I think, no offense to any tournament out there whatsoever, but I've played in so many tournaments that -- and I didn't really have a break between regular tour and this tour. The least I played was probably 18 to 20 tournaments my 49th year. I played like 14 or 15 on the regular tour. You can get into that, not get your juices flowing. I'm sure if I could somehow win a tournament it would probably help honestly. I won't say it's going through the motions but go to a new course, something that's pretty hard like at Oak Tree, it gets your attention. It's not about there's more permanence to a major because honestly my view, they're great tournaments to win but there's only four majors. There's four. There's not nine or 15, there's four majors. And we're not playing in them actually anymore unless you win a major and get to play in one of theirs. I think that's been a bit of an issue I've dealt with. I've been doing it for so long and it doesn't get your juices flowing I guess would be the word.

Q. How often do you look back at your --

MARK BROOKS: Zero. I'm not that kind of guy.

Q. How did that change your life though?

MARK BROOKS: Not a lot.

Q. Really?

MARK BROOKS: No. I mean, the cool part about winning a major is that it has a lot of permanence. All the other tournaments, I mean, bar maybe a Colonial, maybe a Memorial -- of course it started in '76, so it's not even that old -- there's permanence and people, the casual golf fan, they'll remember. Occasionally they'll remember. Oh, yeah, yeah, you played in that playoff, I remember that deal. That's why, you know, it was a big deal to win it but I don't look back. If I look back on any of them it's in 2001 at Southern Hills because I honestly, I was really close. If I could have pulled that playoff off, I probably would have been done. And I said it. If you ever look up the transcript, I wasn't kidding. I would have been like 40 years old, two majors, five-nine, 150 pounds. Are you kidding me? I would have done something else. Not many people can go out on top. To me, to have been able to do that would have been time to go home and I didn't.

Q. And you shot 65 today?

MARK BROOKS: I needed it, whatever that is, 13, 14 years ago.

Q. You're the club champion someplace.

MARK BROOKS: No, I wouldn't have done that, but I probably would have done a little more golf course design, which I enjoy. Of course that would have been not a great business to be in now. I would have been on a pretty hot streak though from 2001 to about '08, there was a lot going on.

Q. Mike Goodes shot 64. How good of a score is that on the course the way it's playing today?

MARK BROOKS: Really good. I mean, there's no wind but making putts on these poa annua greens, I mean the greens are good but they're tricky. Like I said, you could play a great round and end up shooting a couple under, it's not hard to do here, just kind of get in the wrong spot a few times.

Q. With your knee or your back, can you sustain it over three days?

MARK BROOKS: Oh, not three days, I could do it for another 10 years. I'm fixed.

Q. This tournament, can you follow up with --

MARK BROOKS: I have no idea what I'll shoot tomorrow. I'll go out there on the first hole with a game plan and I'll try to hit a good shot and we'll go from there. Again, I've been doing it a long time and the only difference out here is today's like Friday. So one more good round, then you can start doing your deal. But you've got Bernhard Langer and Couples, they can shoot 62 at any moment.

DAVE SENKO: Thanks, Mark.

MARK BROOKS: You've got it.