

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: LEE JANZEN & ROCCO MEDIATE**  
**Wednesday, April 22, 2015**



**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Okay, folks, we welcome Lee Janzen and Rocco Mediate to the media center for the Bass Pro Shops Legends of Golf at Big Cedar Lodge. Lee, your first time here but you and Rocco go way back to college golf at Florida Southern. Just maybe a couple thoughts from each of you about coming back to this special area for the tournament.

**LEE JANZEN:** Well, this is my first time for this tournament and it's definitely the first time for Top of the Rock, which is fantastic. Since I've only just gotten here, I'm still wandering around in amazement looking at all the things that have been built. The par 3 is fantastic, the way they laid it out, and seemingly you really don't see the rest of the golf course. Even though the holes really are right next to each other, they're not very far from the clubhouse, but most par 3 courses you can usually see the whole course from every hole. So that's very unique that they could design it that way. I have been to Branson before 27 years ago, I was here playing a mini tour event in Branson, and then also I played in a Web event in Springfield, and I played Branson Creek before it was renamed. So it's not the first time in the area but first time for this.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** How special is it for you to play in this event with Rocco?

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Careful.

**LEE JANZEN:** Well, you know, I don't know when we started talking about playing in this event together, but I know the Diners Club in the mid '90s, the first year we could play in that we were really excited about getting to be partners in that, and then we played the Shark Shootout together. We should have won the Diners.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** How'd we do?

**LEE JANZEN:** We should have won the Diners.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** We lost that one.

**LEE JANZEN:** Even the people who won know that we should have won.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** But then the next one.

**LEE JANZEN:** Then when we got paired together at the Shark Shootout, it was like a chance for a redemption for us. That was a great, fun three days and we did play well enough to win. So it was just something, we looked forward to playing together and being able to -- because we've been friends for so long, to be able to play with each other in a team event and actually win is pretty special.

We're not making any promises this week, but it will be nice. You know, as soon as he turned 50, the countdown's been on since I was going to turn 50 and basically we had to wait until then. I couldn't play with him before then. I told him when I turned 50 that we were going to play together as a team, so you needed to -- whoever your partner was going to be, you needed to let them know up front so they wouldn't be too disappointed.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Oh, that was funny.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Rocco, talk about playing with Lee.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Oh, we go -- we know how -- I don't know, it's just like we've known each other so long, I know exactly what he's going to do probably before he does it and vice versa. So it's just a matter of we just love it. It's going to be a lot of fun. I've been waiting for him to get out here obviously. It's only been what, a year and a half, last August did you start?

**LEE JANZEN:** I haven't been out a year yet.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** So yeah, it's fun to have someone you've known for so long to be able to hang with again like the old days. We hadn't been around each other for a while because I was out, I was out here, he was -- we were just everywhere so it didn't work out like that. But now it's better. And seeing Bev again, his wife, it's going to be a blast. It's a cool thing, real cool. You guys will be babysitting when the baby comes, just so you know.

**LEE JANZEN:** There's a sign-up list.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Won't have to convince Bev too much about that.

**Q. You mentioned the baby, you've got a new arrival coming. Does that hurt your focus at all? Do you have your mind in two different places these days?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I don't think it hurts it. It actually might even sharpen it because I can't wait for that to happen, which is in a couple weeks, maybe earlier. So Houston's up in the air for me as we speak, but I'll find out more tonight. Not really, no. It's just the coolest thing ever. I never thought that would happen again and it's happening. It's a girl, so that's even better because I already have three boys. She'll be well protected. So yeah, it's all good. I'm ready to go, I can't wait until I see her. She's coming pretty soon.

**Q. Lee, Rocco, I'd just like to hear from you. Again, welcome to Branson Missouri to the tournament. I'd just like to hear again some of your impressions not only of Top of the Rock but of Branson and what kind of impression do you think our area and courses are going to make on golfers who have yet to come here to the area?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I'll go first. My first time ever here was last year and, you know, I never

knew anything about this whole area. It's stunning. But then what they've done up here and the tournament they gave us to come play, which we really wanted to have it because Legends goes back to in the '80s, right? Actually '70s.

**LEE JANZEN:** I would say it would be the cornerstone, the beginning of the Champions Tour.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah, it was. To be able to come up here and then have him do what he's done here, it's ridiculous how cool it is. And it's a beautiful part of the country. I was just telling someone this morning, I never realized -- obviously I was never here but it's just cool. I stayed in Branson last year, it was great. Just walked around a lot and it was cool. But it's just a neat -- I don't know how else to explain it. It's second to none. Everything you want to do here you can do. There's not many places you can do that. And the highest quality stuff you could ever imagine is right here. He didn't mess around at all as you know.

**Q. Lee, what do you think of the area?**

**LEE JANZEN:** Well, I had been here before, but yes, this view up here is the best of all the views that I've seen. You get to see all the things. You know, driving on the roads you get a glimpse of some of the beauty, but up here you get to see all of it, which is great. We as players appreciate the effort that's being made to make everything the way it is. This complex is fantastic. You can see all the work they're doing over at Buffalo Ridge, too. The additions for just the surrounding areas of the holes. The holes themselves are great, and we know every year it's going to get better and better. But for the Legends to be here, I think it's a great fit.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Did he bring the buffaloes in again? He better bring the buffaloes in. There's a couple buffaloes. Would it be buffali? I don't know how you say that. Is that a word?

**LEE JANZEN:** Or just go buffalo.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** There was a bunch last year, he brought those in. Of course he did, why wouldn't he?

**Q. I just wanted to find out what you guys thought about the greens, the speed of the greens. How does that compare with the other stops on Tour, and then shapes and undulations and that sort of thing. Given the fact that this is a par 3, really hard greens, it's kind of hard to score on if conditions are just right, so just wanted --**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Well, they're definitely fast, as fast as we play. They're minimum 11 I would guess, right?

**LEE JANZEN:** Buffalo Ridge is even faster.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Really? I haven't gone over there yet. I'll play tomorrow. But I haven't -- he played the other day. They're firm. I'll tell you what, these greens are not soft. I know it's rained a lot, but they're pretty firm right now so hopefully it'll stay that way.

**LEE JANZEN:** Doesn't seem to matter how much it rains for this part, for this complex, it's going to be perfect.

**Q. As you guys said, you obviously go way back. I kind of want to know how did the asking or pairing kind of come about? Did he ask you or how did that work?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** He told me we were playing together. I mean, I was waiting, I was waiting.

**LEE JANZEN:** You played two years ago and you said --

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** He didn't ask, he said we're playing together. I played with Elk the first two years and I said sorry, bud, but my man's coming out and I have to play with him. Elk was perfect, he was like, absolutely. It's still hard to do those. You know, you don't want to make anybody angry, it's just how it is. He said yeah, we're playing this first year. I said okay.

**Q. Is that something kind of the friendship goes back to Florida Southern?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**LEE JANZEN:** 1982.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Lot of golf, lot of golf happened. Lot of fun stuff happened over those years. It's hard -- you don't really get to -- like some of the events that he's won, the Opens he's won, especially the first one I was there waiting. You don't get to do that. Maybe regular tournaments, but not big tournaments like that. You don't get to see one of your best friends do -- go to the pinnacle of something we've both tried to do our whole lives, and so fast by the way. He was only on Tour how many years before he won the Open? A couple?

**LEE JANZEN:** My fourth year.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah, it was fast and it was cool to be a part of that. I remember it like it was yesterday at Baltusrol. I remember after we went upstairs, it was fantastic. He didn't know what the hell was going on, I didn't know. It was like what, what happened? And then during all those years, same thing, and then in '98 when he did it again I was hurt so he called me right after he was done. It's the coolest thing ever. You don't get to do that very often. A lot of guys don't get to do that. I've had a blast with it.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Do you guys wear anything to represent Florida Southern while you're here, any colors?

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** No.

**LEE JANZEN:** We hadn't thought about it.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Pretty much no on that. I don't have much red. But it was a great place to go to school. We both learned a lot there and learned -- I learned how to play golf there myself because I came from Pittsburgh so I was always in the cold. Being able to play year round down there, I became a little bit better a lot faster because I never got to do that. I got better faster because I was down there. And great team. Marco Dawson was on our team. Great players, we had a really good team. And it was just -- that's where I learned to play, basically learned to play, I mean, period.

**Q. Lee, turning 50, how fired up were you to get out here?**

**LEE JANZEN:** Well, it happens to a lot of players on Tour that somewhere around 45 everybody starts asking you how old you are, and they would just say, are you on the Champions Tour yet, because I already know why they're asking. And that goes on for a few years and you just want to.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Smack 'em.

**LEE JANZEN:** I was thinking punch 'em. But I would say once I got inside a year and a half I was really thinking I wish I was already 50 because it's a huge challenge trying to compete against 25-year olds that hit it 330 on the fly.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah.

**LEE JANZEN:** I would say that everybody that gets to the Champions Tour has lost some ability to swing fast. There's just some diminishing part of your game. You just have to admit it. So we all play -- in that regard, everybody out here is sort of in the same boat. There isn't really somebody who hits it --

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** 90 yards past you. It's like the old days.

**LEE JANZEN:** It's more of what you saw before equipment change. There's still some guys who can move the ball off the tee, but it's not as many. So in that regard, we're all playing more of the same game.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Used to be a lot though, even back in the early times, in the '90s and even in 2000s, obviously guys hit it further but not 50, 80 yards further. There was one or two maybe, maybe. Now there's like 20 or 30 guys.

**LEE JANZEN:** The best way I can explain it before the equipment really changed how far guys hit it, the longest guys on Tour, if I played with them, I could outdrive them occasionally

with a great drive under the right conditions. That is impossible now.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** That's impossible.

**LEE JANZEN:** Even 10 years ago there was no way I could outdrive Dustin Johnson or Robert Garrigus or J.B. Holmes or you could name probably 30 guys. Occasionally I could hit past Davis or Freddie or John Daly because 300 yards used to be super long. Now they hit 3-woods that far.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** It's changed a bit. Jordan proved something two weeks ago that I was most -- I loved the most is he's a medium length hitter, that's it. He took that place apart.

**LEE JANZEN:** He's long enough, though.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Yeah, but he doesn't overpower anything. He just proved you could play the game like we used to play it, I guess, instead of overpowering it like Rory and Tiger do, which is great. But it was good to see that this kid came out and he drove normal, you know, wasn't hitting 9-irons to the par 5s, 7-irons to the par 5s, he was hitting woods and long irons like we did back then, too. So it was cool to see that. But out here it's a whole different ballgame. There's more playing -- a lot of different shots are out here, a lot of curves, a lot of stuff. It's like it used to be.

**Q. What's the competition level like? Are guys as competitive as ever?**

**LEE JANZEN:** Yeah, the competitive fire is still there and to win you have to play exceptional. There's enough guys playing well that if you think that it's going to be easy coming down the stretch, you'll get beat.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** We're used to four days and marathon golf, you could call it. You could kind of mess up a day and have some time to recover. You can't do that here. It's a sprint, and if you're not ready for day one you will not win the golf tournament period. It does not matter. You can't recover unless you shoot something ridiculously low. But the level of golf out here is ridiculous.

I couldn't believe it. The first week -- my first week two years ago Cookie shot 17-under par at Hualalai, three days. I shot 17-under par at Allianz in three days. So I was in Naples and I was in the press room and I said, so one guy shot 17-under par the first tournament of the year in three days, another guy shot 17-under par the second tournament in three days. Come get some of that, come on, open it up. If some of these Tour guys want to come out and play, bring it on out. We'll hand them their butts, believe me. The scores are ridiculous out here. And our golf courses aren't 6,000 yards, they're 7,000 and up. A couple times we play shorter ones. But I think the first year, I don't know if I asked you or somebody else, eight times that year our golf courses were longer than the PGA TOUR.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Last week being one of them.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** So not that that -- we're not playing pitch-and-putt golf courses. We're playing courses we played -- length we played our whole lives, so I love that part of it. I love that they're not real little ones.

**LEE JANZEN:** I would have to ask if there's another 50-year old set of athletes that perform as close to their peak as we do, I don't know who that would be.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** There really can't be.

**LEE JANZEN:** For whatever that's worth. Golf is unique that way.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I feel we should be getting better as we get older as long as we're in reasonable shape or just keep things -- we know enough or should know enough to where we can still play and hit shots and feel the same way we did before. I try not to feel any different than I did 15 years ago, but obviously I'm sure there is some differences. The scoring out here is unbelievable as you've noticed, as you've noticed. Things happen here that you can't even imagine.

**Q. I was wondering coming into this tournament as a team, what's kind of your mindset as the days go on?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** We just want to beat everybody. That's pretty much it.

**LEE JANZEN:** The first hole, hit a good shot and make birdie.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** That's the thing about best ball, have a couple shots at it, just want to have fairways and greens.

**LEE JANZEN:** There is a slight strategy to best ball and alternate shot. Best ball, the ideal thing is to be conservative off the tee and into the green, and then if you do that, then more than likely both of us will have birdie putts more often, so percentages are if we both have birdie putts more often, we'll have a better chance to make birdies.

**Q. Are there any guys coming up in the next year or two that are buddies, any guys you're looking forward to that are coming on to the Senior Tour?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** JD's coming out next year sometime, that will be interesting, that will be a lot of fun. Daly I'm talking about. Yeah, he'll pump it up a little bit, not as much as Fred but he'll do it. Hi, Fred.

**Q. Seems like a question a lot of golfers get when they're here, of course a very good PGA golfer came from this area, Payne Stewart.**

**LEE JANZEN:** Right, we were neighbors. Obviously the record book just shows that we

had a couple tournaments that were always be linked together. Yeah, living in Orlando, too, we had a lot of mutual friends, so it doesn't go very often where I don't run into somebody and we don't have a conversation about Payne. I played the (inaudible) here in Springfield and went out to Hickory both times. Just seeing where he grew up and where he played, and seeing the golf course and the dog legs and how it curved I can understand why he developed the game he did being a shotmaker, curving the ball off the tee, so I just enjoyed that. And then Jim Morris, who was a dear friend of Payne's and his dad also, over the years anytime I have a conversation with him, the central part of the conversation is always about Payne. And he would have been a great addition to the Champions Tour.

**Q. Also interested, I can imagine that the talk will go around when you guys are out playing and amongst your circle of friends, recently we had a press event and we were very proud to have Ben Crenshaw here making the announce of his course design at The Ridge. I just wanted to get your impressions on that, what you thought about that announcement and do you plan oncoming back to play this course?**

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Crenshaw-Coore, I don't know if there's anybody building better golf courses in the world right now. Ben is -- we've known him for a hundred years and he's just so cool and he's so -- they're just really good. They don't -- they just do it like it was done a hundred years ago. I've only played a couple of his courses.

**LEE JANZEN:** I played a few.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** They're phenomenal, all of them are phenomenal.

**LEE JANZEN:** Yeah, anything he's done in the last 10 years, you know, I don't know how far back you go with all his courses but I would have to think he's the most sought after guy right now. So I'm very excited to see the announcement when that came out that he would be doing a course, and I'm assuming we're going to use it in the future for the tournament, at least I hope so. If not, I'm going to go play while I'm here.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** I think he said to me, I asked him how many courses he does, he goes, We will never put under contract more than two a year. Whether he still does that or not, that's cool because he can put some time in it. You build 10 or 15 a year, not that that happens anymore, how can you put the time? You just want put the time in.

**LEE JANZEN:** They spent a lot of time on routings. I hear the same story over and over that they'll walk a site and come up with 25 routings or even 50 routings and keep working on it until they get what they think is the best routing and find the best spots for certain greens. And they always have a nice flow of short holes and long holes, par 5s you can reach. It's always a lot of fun playing a Crenshaw-Coore course.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** Once again, he got the right guy. He doesn't get the wrong guy here.

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Well, good luck to you both this week. Thanks for joining us. We've got Fred Funk right back here.

**ROCCO MEDIATE:** So let him stay back there. We've got more to talk about.