

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: LARRY MIZE
Friday, August 21, 2015



DAVE SENKO: Well, Larry, great start, 5 under, including birdies on three of your last five holes. Maybe just some general thoughts on your day and how the round went, and looks like five birdies, no bogeys.

LARRY MIZE: Yeah, you know, it was a little tougher day than I guess I expected starting out. With the coolness and the breeze, some of the holes played pretty good. But I played real solid, I drove the ball pretty well. Anytime I did miss a shot, it wasn't too bad. That's when you play well, when you don't -- when your misses are real playable. I played real solid, five birdies, no bogeys, no major mistakes, no mental blunders. It was a lot of fun, just played a real solid round.

DAVE SENKO: Birdies, No. 7.

LARRY MIZE: Yeah, 7 was playing pretty good into the wind. I hit my iron shot in there a little thin. I stayed in the face of the bunker in the grass, which wasn't too bad of a position, but I ended up chipping it in for birdie, so made a nice birdie there.

DAVE SENKO: How far was that?

LARRY MIZE: I was probably only 20 feet from the hole, just on that upslope, the face of the bunker in the grass.

No. 8, I hit a sand wedge in there eight feet, made that for birdie.

Then 14, hit a good drive to give me about a 60-yard wedge, knocked it in there about six feet and made that for birdie.

Had another good gap wedge into 15, hit a good shot in there about 12 feet, made that for birdie.

Then 18, I hit my sand wedge a little too far and I guess I made about an 18-footer coming back down the hill there for birdie, which was a nice way to finish.

DAVE SENKO: Saves at all?

LARRY MIZE: Good question. I missed 7. I knocked it over the 10th green. If I did have a mental mistake, that was probably one; I took the wrong club there. But I made a nice up-and-down from over 10, and wow, I guess that was it. That's right, I only missed -- I guess I only missed those two greens. I kind of like it like that, that's good. I hope I can do some more of that.

Q. Did you surprise yourself at all? Recent form hasn't been great. To shoot 67 on a day like this, nobody's even coming close to that.

LARRY MIZE: Yeah, I am pleasantly surprised with the round. I've been working hard. I was home the last two weeks working hard to get things turned around. I was optimistic I could have a good week this week, but especially the way it started out with the conditions, 67, I am pleasantly surprised with 67, yes.

Q. What's been holding you back? Is it mental mistakes, is it putting, is it chipping? What is it?

LARRY MIZE: It's been a little bit of everything. I still think it's been more ball striking than anything. I've really gotten my, I guess you could say, swing out of whack and I've just been having a hard time getting it back going again. With that, the short game hasn't been great, but there's been so much pressure put on my short game by the way I've been hitting it, it's hard. When you're hitting it so bad, you know you need to work on your short game, but it's so hard to put the time in on the short game. You need to because you feel like you've got to hit it a little better, it doesn't really matter. It's been probably more ball striking, but yet a little bit of everything. Nothing has been exceptional recently, unfortunately. But today was really an encouragement for me to get things turned around, start the tournament like this, and I'm just going to kind of relish in this day.

Q. If you have the lead today, can you remember the last time you had a first-round lead?

LARRY MIZE: No, I can't. It's been a while, yeah, it's been a while since I had a first-round lead. It's a nice spot to be, yeah, if that happens. It's still early. It's getting nicer out there, but still, the greens are firm, so sometimes it's hard to stick it in there close because the greens are taking a bounce. Got to hit some good irons to put it in there real close. That was the thing with me, I made a lot of nice two-putts from the 30- to 40-foot range to keep everything going, and then when I did get a chance to make birdie, I was able to get them in there.

Q. The ball didn't carry as far today, right, because of the weather?

LARRY MIZE: Yeah, especially this morning. This afternoon it got a little better, but yeah, this morning, like the first hole was playing about as long as I've ever seen it play here, kind of into the wind, I think out of the right, into us a little bit and cool.

Q. In the first few groups only one guy made it in two.

LARRY MIZE: Two, I've got no chance. Maybe Freddie or somebody can get there in two, but that would be two big ones this morning, which is unusual for the first hole.

Q. When you're playing well, is this a course that fits your game?

LARRY MIZE: You know, I like this golf course. I don't know my record here. I want to say maybe I Top 10ed it one time and I think this is my seventh time here. T8, okay. Other than that, I don't think I've -- I think there's been some 20th or low 20s or stuff like that. But I like the golf course, so I do think the course suits my game, yeah, I really do. I like it. You've got to be really good with your irons and it's -- I like it.

Q. You probably told the story of the '87 Masters a million times. How life changing was that for you?

LARRY MIZE: You know, it really -- hopefully it didn't change me, but it definitely is life changing from the opportunities that it gave me and confidence that it gave me, and also financially it's been very rewarding. Obviously when you win a major, and the Masters is, of course, being from Augusta it's my favorite obviously. But it has been a tremendous blessing in my life to win the Masters from just even the standpoint that I got to be home with the family more because I was in a position where I continued to play well and that kind of kept things going so I could be home more. But it's been a blessing, no doubt.

Q. What did you choose for the Champions dinner?

LARRY MIZE: You know, I was young, I wasn't sure how it worked, so I just was real careful. Even though I'm kind of a steak-and-potatoes guy, I like steak, so I had steak and I don't know the side dishes or anything with it. And then being from Georgia, I had peach cobbler for dessert. The Peach State, I did that a little bit for that. Just had steak.

Q. You were born in Augusta. When was the first time you went on the course? Did you have family that was a member there?

LARRY MIZE: No, we weren't a member. My dad played out there some through business associates, I think, but I kind of had the dream to play there in the tournament. But I did get an opportunity to play, I think it was 1980, it was when they were going through the transition between the Bermuda greens to bent greens. So I played there, I think it was '80, and it was -- it wasn't like playing -- there were like eight temporary greens. I remember the 10th green was at the bottom of the hill just over the bunker. So I did play it. But then next time I played it and played it for real was in March of '84. I won Memphis in '83, so I was in the tournament in '84 and I went over in March to play a practice round.

Q. That must have been thrilling?

LARRY MIZE: Yeah. You know, I tell people I was so thrilled and excited, I got better -- I was more nervous Tuesday on the first tee than I was Thursday. And that doesn't mean I wasn't nervous Thursday, that just tells you how nervous I was Tuesday. It rained on Monday and I think I went down 10 and came back up 18, I was going to play, but it was just raining too hard so I didn't get to play until Tuesday. I duck-hooked it left on one Tuesday in the trees. Wednesday I duck-hooked it left in the trees. Thursday, thank goodness, I hit it

down the middle. But it was just a dream come true to get into the tournament. I was really nervous.

Q. You get questions obviously going back to your Masters. Do you get it from other players?

LARRY MIZE: Not really from the players. I mean, they'll bring it up a little bit, you know, but I get it from pro-ams, from amateurs, people I meet at outings and so forth, it comes up. It's a good subject. I enjoy talking about it. But players, you know, they'll -- they're maybe having a little fun with me or they'll say something like, "Hey, Larry, have you been asked about that today?" Have a good time with it.

DAVE SENKO: Thank you, Larry.

LARRY MIZE: Thank y'all.