

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: KENNY PERRY
Thursday, August 27, 2015



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Kenny, thanks for joining us here, a familiar spot to you, En-Joie Golf Club. You haven't played in a few weeks, but coming off the win at the 3M Championship, I felt I needed to have you come in. You've got some confidence coming into this week?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I've had three weeks off. It's been great. Spent a lot of time with my grandkids. I've got five grandkids now, a couple are a month old. I have three kids, they all had kids this year, so I have a five-month old and two six-week olds. Two of them were born close together. So one had a little issue with -- my grandson through my son, he had a kidney problem. They thought they were going to have to do a procedure, but we found out yesterday everything's -- they say these children can outgrow -- they called it this big name, I don't know what it is. But he was great, so that was very comforting for me to shoot on up here and come back and start playing again.

So haven't played much golf in three weeks, just piddled with it a little here and there. I guess mentally I'll be fresh but physically I don't know where it's going to be. I've told everybody I'm kind of cramming for a test today to try to go out there and find a golf game in one day. It's happened in the past. I had two weeks off before I went to Minnesota and won there, so maybe I'll find out a new way how to prepare for a golf tournament, I don't know, but looking forward to it.

I played many rounds of golf here back in the PGA TOUR days. Played here a couple years ago. I didn't play last year, I played here a couple years ago. I had a good week, I think I Top 10ed it. It's a golf course I love to play, it tells you exactly how to play it. To me, looked like the fairways are getting tighter and tighter. But the golf course is very firm, it's as firm as I've ever seen it, so I think it's going to bring a lot of people in play this week because the golf ball's going a long way out there. So the golf course won't play near the length that it normally plays. The greens are perfect. It's going to be a shootout. There's going to be some really good scores shot here this week.

Q. When you say you just piddled a little bit, define that. Do you play 18?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I didn't touch a club for two weeks after the win, and then last week I started hitting balls. Four days out of the week I went out and hit balls. Played one round of golf, played 18 holes. There was just a lot going on with the grandkids and a lot of things happening with my grandson that I didn't want to take the time to go practice, I wanted to kind of be with him, so that was kind of where my mindset was.

Q. What's his name?

KENNY PERRY: Carver is my -- Justin's son. It was good news.

Q. I'm based in Florida, took the road trip up to Valhalla for that 2008 Ryder Cup (inaudible) passed it by. Back up there last year for the PGA and I pulled in, and kind of unique, I'm taking pictures going in so I pull into the parking lot. Your dad pulled up alongside in a golf cart and just hit it off with him, spent two hours with him. He took me out to see the house (inaudible) with your sister and the wedding. Your dad was a great guy, I knew him for two hours, felt like I knew him for his whole life. What did he mean to you, to your game of golf?

KENNY PERRY: Well, he was my hero, he was my hero. Here's a man who survived the Battle of the Bulge. He told me he was in a foxhole for 30 days, didn't take his boots off. He was dug in, it was frigid. He said the Germans were blowing 'em all up all around him. He's lucky he survived, he said.

He's a tough guy and learned a lot of life lessons from that man. He's fun to talk to. I mean, he had a lot of stories. He had a lot of life stories and he was -- he was really competitive. He loved to play golf, but he loved any kind of board game, card game. Back home in Kentucky Rook's a big game, it's a partner game. He used to beat me mercifully [sic.] I'd be six, seven years, eight, I'd be bawling, I'd be crying, I'd be throwing the game at him. I remember distinctly picking the games up and throwing them straight at him because I'd be so mad. It was amazing, and it made me the person who I am today. I'm a nice guy, but I want to beat your brains out when I get on that golf course. I'm very competitive.

He actually -- I was probably 10 years old and he worked at Life & Casualty Insurance at the time, it's now called American General. He was a divisional vice president and he did a lot of the, I guess the social events at night. He would bring the people in. He would have to supply the wine and the beer and the whiskey and all that, so in our house we would have these huge stacks of whiskey by the refrigerator. My dad never drank. I was like, "Hey, Dad, I want to try some of that." I don't know what type of whiskey it was or whatever. He poured me a shot of that and he said, "Just pour it down, just go for it." And man, it lit me up, I was on fire. I remember to this day I went screaming, running around the house going, "I need water!" I was only probably 10 years old, I wasn't that old. I haven't drank to this day. That just tells me how smart that guy was, he broke me of the habit early. I guess he had seen a lot of problems with alcohol. That was pretty neat.

But he worked five days a week. I have three older sisters and a little brother and we didn't have a lot of money, but our time together was on the golf course on the weekends. He loved to play golf. He taught me how to play, and he was pretty much my instructor all the way up to my freshman year in college and then Norman Head took over when I signed at Western Kentucky to play golf there. So played golf there at Western for four years. Norman taught me pretty much until he passed away about 15 years ago. Now Matt Killen kind of took over, who actually he taught Matt Killen for a while. Matt's a great young instructor now. He was voted one of the top new instructors a few years ago, so very comfortable with him.

But Dad would always go with me -- when I qualified for the Tour in '86, Dad caddied for me

and he would always have a cigar. He was probably in his bib overalls with his cigars right in the front pouch. That's my dad, he loved to smoke cigars. Everybody tried to get him to quit. He passed away in November and he was 90 years old still smoking. I said, "Y'all leave that guy alone, let him enjoy what few years he's got left."

But he would always chart -- he would walk with me on every hole and he would chart every shot, every putt, and he would kind of make notes for the 18 holes and then he would write a little something down, and he handed me the score card at the end of each night for me to just kind of go over. He was basically trying to teach me course management a little bit, where he thought I could improve or get better.

You know, it was -- me and him, it was a great relationship. I thought the world of that guy. It was pretty neat. And I miss him. Losing him in November was tough, but he went out -- he taught me how to live and he taught me how to die. He was out with my sister. He's 90 years old, still drove, still lived by himself. My mom had passed away about eight years earlier and she had multiple myeloma cancer, but I was really worried about him once I lost my mom. But shoot, he was tough. He took over everything at the house, he took over. But he was out to dinner, he was at Cheddar's, he was with my sister and her husband and they said he just leaned his head forward and that was it.

He always told me, he said, "I don't ever buy green bananas, Son. I don't buy green bananas." That's the way he looked at life. I tell everybody he was probably mad because he didn't get to eat his rack of ribs and his sweet tea he had in front of him. Amazing man. Hopefully I'll take some of that energy and that competitiveness and try to figure it out come Friday.

Q. This tournament's always had that family atmosphere. Talk about stepping onto En-Joie, what it means to a player.

KENNY PERRY: Well, we were always very comfortable here. It was always such a neat community. The tournament was always run great. It was just -- it was always fun to come here. It was not a big market golf course, big market tournament, and yet they provided us -- there was always a lot to do here for the players. They always catered to us, which I always thought was pretty neat. They always made sure that we had everything we needed and they personally would always come and talk to us about it. I think that's why all the guys continue to come back here. Plus, the golf course is just fantastic, too. You can treat the players as good as you want to treat them, if the golf course is not very good, you're going to say, "I'm out of here, I'm not coming back." So I think the combination of both was a win-win, it's a neat place.

Q. Some of the favorite things you like to do off the course while you're in Endicott?

KENNY PERRY: Great restaurants. Like I went to No. 5 last night, which I think is a fantastic restaurant. There's just a lot of neat little places, I call them little mom and pops, little holes in the wall you can go to. I like to go to the, what's the Birmingham -- the AA ball

team?

Q. Binghamton.

KENNY PERRY: Binghamton, yeah. I like going, I do that, have a good time there. I kind of do more sports stuff than anything when I'm here.

Q. (Inaudible.)

KENNY PERRY: Yeah, yeah. He was rehabbing or something, coming back? So pretty neat. It's just you don't want to spend all your time in the hotel room. It's nice to get out and just kind of wander, meet the people a little bit.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Anything else for Kenny? Kenny, good luck this week, thanks for joining us.

KENNY PERRY: You got it.