

**FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW: GRAEME McDOWELL**  
**Monday, November 16, 2015**



**MODERATOR:** Like to welcome the winner of the 2015 OHL Classic at Mayakoba, Graeme McDowell. Graeme, congratulations on your third career PGA TOUR victory.

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** I know it was a little bit of extra to get the job done but you certainly did, and one thing that stuck out early in the week was you seemed to come in with some cautious optimism and you certainly parlayed that into a good result. So with that, just a few comments on the week.

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Yeah, for sure. Like you say, a little extra time but I guess I was fortunate to be in that extra time. It required a 5 from Russell down the last and I felt very fortunate to be there. Like you say, came into the week with some cautious optimism. I was hoping that I was going to come in here feeling super fresh and looking to the 2016 season but didn't really feel that way. I guess Thanksgiving and Christmas and the reset button and really sort of a fresh start in '16 and I guess I was very keen to put 2015 behind me. It's been a rough one. I've talked about it many times, it's been a rough year I think for all the right reasons. I've been enjoying my life off the golf course with my new beautiful family and golf maybe hasn't been as much of a priority as it should be. My game has suffered accordingly. This summer was a grind. But the last two or three months has really been kind of back to where I want to be. I've really been playing well. I put myself in position a few times, Dunhill Links, British Masters, Turkey, and kind of came up short. Played badly, in fact, back nine on Sunday. Walked away frustrated and disappointed. But I guess good stuff happening, putting myself in position, not finishing the job.

I guess I've got to thank the people around me really, my team, my family for keeping believing in me because there were multiple times during the year where I was losing the belief in myself, where you're asking yourself questions like am I good enough anymore, am I finished with this game, do I have long left, questions like that. When you're out there for five and a half hours on the golf course not playing well, these are the type of questions you ask yourself. I think that's why golf is the ultimate mental sport, because you have all the time in the world to ask yourself all the crazy questions in the world. There's no doubt I doubted myself many times this year, but the last few months has been much more where I want to be, hitting the shots that I want to see and this is big for me. I dreamed of this day coming again sometime, maybe I thought it would be maybe not quite as soon as this, and I said to myself that I was really going to appreciate it and I do appreciate it. This feels really nice. Certainly going to use it as a bit of a springboard and a stepping block to where I want to be in this game again.

**MODERATOR:** You certainly summed it up well on your way in, you said this one means a lot. With that, we'll open it up and take a few questions.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Yeah, I mean, being here this week was a result of changing my strategy, changing my focus and taking -- no disrespect to the European Tour, I had to take my focus off of that for the time being because my priority, I basically lost my card this year. Thankfully, I had another year exemption, but I couldn't be in this position this time next year regardless of whether I was in the Ryder Cup or regardless of where I was in the Race to the Dubai. I'm bringing my family up in America and when it all boils down to it, this is where I want to be employed. Of course I will remain loyal to the European Tour always, I want to play Ryder Cups, but there's no doubt that that's priority number two for me. Priority number one is having a job and having the best paying job available when you boil it all down. Like I say, I had to re-prioritize, I had to focus myself on making sure that I got off to a faster start on the PGA TOUR Money List than I have in years gone past. I normally don't tee it up until Honda. That's too long to wait against these guys, they're too good. It takes over a million dollars these days to keep your card. Being at Mayakoba was a part of re-prioritizing and a refocus. And like you say, it happened a little faster than I thought it was going to happen but that's a great problem. Like I say, sometimes when I get my focus right, I'm a very good player. When I don't have my focus right, I struggle. So this was definitely a result of having my mind in the right place.

**Q. Talk through the tee shot on 18 in the playoff, how much that was motivated by trying to stay away from the driver and be the first guy to attack the pin.**

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** The 3-wood off the first playoff hole was driven by just not wanting to hit driver, I've got to be honest with you. I wish I could give you the Tiger Woods story from -- I'm not sure who he beat in the playoff back in 2000 or whatever it was when he tried to lay back and put the pressure on them. I wish I could say that was the reason. I just don't like driver down there. Even before I started driving it badly this week, early in the week when I was sort of trying to break this golf course down, I didn't like driver on 18. You know, people may have watched me in regulation on the 72nd hole and thought 3-wood was a very negative play. They maybe saw me in the playoff and thought 3-wood was pretty negative. It was the only play I saw down there. I hit a really good one in the playoff hole. We were between 5-iron and 6-iron. I say we were between. I liked 6, my caddie didn't and we ended up hitting a smooth 5. That swing is one that I've really been working on the last few months, that 5-iron swing. It's as good a 5-iron as I've hit in a long time.

Funny anecdote for you, I got a text message lesson from Greg Norman on Saturday night and he said he watched some of the coverage and he thought I looked a little short and a little quick. He said complete my backswing and be a bit more relaxed at address. So we had a text back and forward and he gave me a couple tips and I really worked hard on completing my backswing yesterday and this morning, and that's one thing I have been working on with my coaches as well. He reminded me of some stuff and I think -- obviously he's one of my big heroes both on and off the golf course and that was nice to get a little positive reinforcement from the Shark.

**Q. Could you talk about the 18 in regulation? That was a huge putt. Did you know where you stood?**

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Yeah, I guess I had mixed emotions going up 18, I thought I probably needed birdie. I had just missed the fairway. I was expecting a little bit of a flyer out of the left rough and I didn't get one. You're facing a 50-footer up the green, you're thinking I just left one short on 16, don't leave this short, and I blew it eight feet by. I'm thinking to myself, I remember standing over the putt saying, you know, just let this putt go. We've been working hard the last few months, let's just hit a good putt here for once. I thought if I had any threat of a chance, I had to make that putt. Obviously I did and that was kind of my last stop really was just try to hit a positive putt and who knows. I hit a great putt there, I hit a really good putt as I have all week. My caddie gave me a great putting tip on Wednesday. We changed my setup just fractionally and it's the best putting week I've had all year. And that's where my strengths are. When I putt well, I putt great and I putted great this week. It let me down on 16 but it didn't let me down on the 72nd hole. It was a great putt and nice to get that little stroke of luck from Russell Knox to get into the playoff. I was watching him, I really didn't think he wasn't going to make four. I thought here's a guy free swinging it off a WGC win last week, he's probably got nothing to lose and he'll probably get this thing up and down. But fortunately it went to a playoff and nice to finish the way it did.

**Q. How important is it now for you that you have that sense of relief, the exemption?**

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Yeah, for sure. Like I tried to say in that earlier question, my focus had to go back to basics. I had to start thinking like a guy whose job is on the line rather than thinking like had a top 50, top 25 in the world player the way I've done the last four years. There's a certain amount of complacency I guess being a top 25 player. You know your schedule. I haven't been in this position in a long time where I'm going into a new year not knowing what to expect. So I had to strip everything back to basics and that's kind of why I ended up with my priority being here.

That's no disrespect to the Ryder Cup or the European Tour or anything I want to achieve in this game. It's a simple, raw, basic assessment of what I need to achieve right now and that's keeping my PGA TOUR status. So like I say, this came quicker than I expected it. But I've always been good when my thinking is clear in this game, and when my thinking is not clear and like I alluded to, that complacency perhaps in my schedule and what I'm trying to achieve not really having sort of defined goals, which when I had to strip it all back and get back to basics, I started thinking a little bit more clearly than I have in a long time. This really ticks more boxes than I expected it to.

(Interruption.)

I hadn't been there in a long time and it takes a little bit of getting used to. Swings off 16 and 17, I was a little tight. But you get in the playoff and I guess there's a certain amount of it's win or lose. There's no double the last and place fifth. You kind of know where you are and

you free up and you make some good swings. I made a really nice 3-wood swing off the 18th tee and like I say, hit as good a 5-iron as I could hit. I like the match play, I like the Ryder Cups, the World Match Plays have been good to me the last few years. I'm a good match player, I've always been that way. I'm a pretty aggressive iron player and that kind of showed with my second shot on the last. That's the mood I get into when I'm in match play golf. And it was nice to finish with a little bit of style, it felt good.

**Q. Now that it's all said and done and you came out on top, have you ever been so happy to make a par in your life as you did on the first hole?**

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Yeah, the first hole was a big key for me yesterday, no doubt about it. It was probably playing as tough as it has all week into a strong wind. I hit 3-wood and I still missed it in the right rough. That was a pretty nervous tee shot for me. Those first three tee shots on this golf course are really intimidating, left-to-right wind with trouble on the right. Getting that four was definitely a good shot in the arm for me. I played really nicely after that. Starting out this morning was tough with the rain coming on at 8:00 again this morning. I was facing probably one of the toughest shots in the round, a 5-wood out of the right rough there on 14. It's been a tough weekend. Like I say, big shout out to the course staff and all the staff for just keeping things running as smoothly as they have. They've done a great job here this weekend and nice it be -- it's a pretty cool trophy, I like it. It's going to look good in my office.

**MODERATOR:** Graeme, congratulations.

**GRAEME McDOWELL:** Thanks so much.