

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW:
April 21, 2016

JACK NICKLAUS
GARY PLAYER



DAVE SENKO: We would like to welcome World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus. Jack, before we open it up for some questions, maybe just talk about the uniqueness of Top of the Rock, Buffalo Ridge and this event, and getting a chance to play with Gary again.

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, uniqueness now because we get to play here, we don't have to go down the street. We never really got to prepare for that, but here we do. We get to prepare for Top of the Rock and it really makes it, from the super seniors or legends or whatever, super legends or super, super old guys, I don't know whatever you want to call us, it really makes it kind of nice. The change goes for us. The other guys are still playing golf and it's -- they can go play the golf courses. I think the change was good for us.

Playing here, as most of you probably know, I did the golf course to start with and I suppose my contribution was a routing, a shell of tees and a green. I think Johnny's contribution was about 10 times that and maybe 20 times that, and what he put in beautification around it, he did a beautiful job.

The tournament obviously is very unique in that we play -- we don't play any par 3 courses on the Senior Tour, Champions Tour. Is that what you call it now for the last 20 years?

DAVE SENKO: PGA TOUR Champions now.

JACK NICKLAUS: Oh, you're PGA TOUR Champions now, oh, okay. Whatever name you've got this year.

(Bell tolling.)

JACK NICKLAUS: Eight more. One more.

Okay. So I probably said all I need to say about what you've got here.

Q. What keeps you coming back here?

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, first of all, I enjoy it. Secondly, I think that, you know, I think I enjoy the fishing and the shooting and the fanfare that goes with it and so forth. I mean, I don't play any golf anymore. I didn't come back for that. I enjoy playing with my partner. Gary enjoys coming back. For 104 years old, he still plays fantastically and he even plays all right for 80.

We enjoy each other's company. We've had fun together through the years. I suppose that probably both of us are pretty much the same -- our families are pretty much lacking. Probably spent more time and Gary's as good a friend as I've had on the tour for a long, long

time. To be able do that is great. But each year I brought one of my grandsons to caddie for me. I've got Gary's boy GT with us this year. GT is a fisherman and a shooter and a golfer, and this is right down his alley. He enjoys all that kind of stuff as did the other boys that I brought with me every year. Billy last year, which is one of Nan's boys. So it's a family affair. I think it's a neat place. It's very pretty.

DAVE SENKO: Gary, we asked Jack right before you got here, maybe you could address this. We just talked about the uniqueness of playing a par 3 and just being here at Top of the Rock, just your thoughts on that.

GARY PLAYER: I'm a great believer that we're making a big mistake in golf with the golf ball going so far, which is influencing people to a large degree to make their golf courses longer and longer. Golf is getting slower and slower and more expensive, so rounds of golf are going down. So what golf needs desperately is shorter golf courses and this is ideal. I mean, when you get to our age, this is nice. You go out and play nine holes, that's terrific and that's all you really need.

So I think it's a marvelous idea. We're just about to complete a 12-hole golf course here at Buffalo Ridge and a man can get after his family or his wife or vice versa, play in a few hours, get home and be together. The world has changed. It's not like the old days where a woman stayed at home. When I got married, my wife basically looked after the home, had children. It was a different world. All my daughters work now, they have to, so it's a different world. So time is a massively important thing in golf now.

Q. This is for both of you. What do you think of the sinkhole?

GARY PLAYER: Well, I'll tell you what happened on the golf course that we've just completed here, or almost completed. There was a small sinkhole, very small, and it's actually like a miracle, you'd think that you had a thousand Egyptians here. He's gone down and down and done by hand and watched the walls by hand, and now you have a mass of rock, almost city. It's just amazing what's under the ground here and what Johnny Morris does up here is really -- I went into the museum, and honestly you've just got to go and see that place. I mean, it's so remarkable, I've never seen anything like it in the world. This man is -- what this man is doing here, I would like to try and do that but I don't have the money to do it. What he's doing is extraordinary. I mean, the place we went to last night, when you think what it was last year and that waterfall just -- I just loved that.

JACK NICKLAUS: Beautiful, isn't it?

GARY PLAYER: Absolutely.

JACK NICKLAUS: He did a great job.

GARY PLAYER: Isn't it wonderful when you've got a lot of money and you can give people pleasure? So many people in the world have a lot of money and they never have other

people that enjoy it, and then they die and they haven't spent it. The last check I write, I want it to bounce.

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, Gary and I feel a little bit the same on that. I've always said I want to die penniless but not right now.

GARY PLAYER: You know, Jack was saying something about friendship. Arnold, Jack and I, we not only battled against each other. If you work hard, people will question, they'll say will there be another big three. Of course there will be, but we won over I think 50 plus-minus majors on regular and senior tours, and we won over 350 tournaments around the world. Now, that's a challenge for the next big three to do.

But the next big three will never do what we did and that is Jack came to my ranch on many occasions, I've been to his house and on his airplane. He always gives me a free ride. Sends me the bill back six months later, you think it's a free ride. We've been down gold mines, game reserves. We've had a friendship like brothers and yet we're highly competitive. We always wanted to beat each other, which is the healthiest thing in the world. That's what made America a great country is competition. And so it's been an incredible friendship which I value very dearly because friendship in life is an essential ingredient.

Q. Speaking of your friendship, a question for each of you about the other.

Mr. Player, have you had any Jack Nicklaus wine or ice cream, and if so, what did you think of it? And to Mr. Nicklaus, have you seen Mr. Player's layout in ESPN the magazine, and if so, what did you think of it?

GARY PLAYER: First of all, he is so stingy with that ice cream, when I stayed at his house, we had to eventually, eating so much, I had to allocate mine in his fridge. I was a guest at his house for a week so I put my mine on the side of the fridge and I opened the lid and I put a note, "Don't even think about it, this is mine." That's the only way I could stop him from eating mine.

JACK NICKLAUS: Every time he came to the house, he put his name on it and it said, "Don't even think about this."

I did not see the ESPN layout. What are you talking about? You mean where he was nude on the cover?

Q. That's correct.

JACK NICKLAUS: That was embarrassing enough.

GARY PLAYER: They did it very, very discreetly. I said no at first and then they chose 10 athletes, men and women, to do it. And one of the best things I ever did actually because they did it very discreetly and we had -- if I tell you, thousands, thousands of tweets and

SMSs. If you can be like that at 77 I was at that stage, I think, I'm going to start looking after my body and keeping in shape. And this is what we need the young people of America to do because this is the most obese nation on the planet.

Q. Question for Mr. Player along those lines. How is has the link between golf and physical fitness progressed as your touring career has progressed?

GARY PLAYER: It's a very interesting stage we're going in at the moment. I think several people on the Golf Channel are saying Rory exercises too much and Tiger exercised too much. It's such nonsense. I mean if they say you get bulked up and this and that. All I've got to do is remind them of Mike Souchak who played the tour. Mike Souchak was all bulked up, a football player of note. I played with some of these football players in America, they're all bulked up and strong, they hit the ball 400 yards. What are they talking about?

I mean, Tiger Woods when he was playing his best was bulked up and lifting heavy and he was playing phenomenal golf. Tiger Woods has not deteriorated because of his weight training, his exercises; he got confused with his swing. He had all these different coaches telling him something. If he never had another lesson -- he won the U.S. Open by 15 shots. If he never had another lesson after that, no telling how many majors he would have won. It's nothing to do with his weight training. But we hope he comes back. I think that it's important for golf that he comes back and we all hope that he does well.

But it's absolute nonsense. In 1965 one of the reasons I won the Grand Slam is through Jack here. Just to show you, everybody says what is your friendship like with Jack, what is he like? I said the first thing that comes to mind besides being the greatest gentleman that I ever played golf with in my career on a golf course, when you did well, he looked you in the eye and he said, "Well done," but he encouraged me to go with him to just up the road to Bellerive to try and win the Grand Slam. And I went up and I was going to go to Greensboro and he said, "Come with me," and I did and that was a big help.

But when I won the Grand Slam, I was squatting the night before I won with 325 pounds on my shoulder. I weighed 166 pounds. Even today, two days ago I pushed 400 pounds with my legs, I did 1,320 situps and I ran the treadmill at max. I'm not deteriorating. I don't know where these guys get this preconceived idea like they know about the body and they know absolutely bugger off.

Q. A little off of that topic, but you guys do a lot of these events and you do a lot of different charities; college of the Ozarks being the charity here. Doing all the things that Johnny Morris has here, can you tell us something about what you enjoy about that partnership, getting to do some different things? Have you gotten a chance to check out College of the Ozarks?

JACK NICKLAUS: I think my wife's having lunch down there today, I think. We go down for dinner every year. I think what a great concept. I think that having kids take responsibility for their education and working their way through school and coming out of

school without debt I think is really kind of nice. I don't understand what's so difficult about that for a lot of other schools to sort of take after.

I mean, I certainly don't believe in giving everybody everything. I'm certainly not -- I'm not on the liberal side of the ledger but I think -- but I'm on the compassionate side of the ledger. I think compassion is something and having people -- I love what America's been, I love what it stands for. People earn their way and just -- you don't have somebody who works their tail off and somebody who does nothing and gets a handout be in the same place. I think that's competition. We would never have won a golf tournament if everybody had the same thing. We all shoot the same score, we come in and they give us a participation trophy? I'm not on that side.

But that's all right. I think that most all of golf tournaments are involved with charities. I know that our charity's involved with several of them and we're very thankful for that. A lot of kids benefit from what we do and I know that Gary has been -- he's had a school he's funded in South Africa, other charities Gary's been involved with. South African kids have had a tremendous benefit from the things that Gary Player has done. We're happy to have that.

The PGA TOUR is basically based on charity and, as you all know, the normal slogan of the PGA TOUR raises more money each year than all other major sports put together, combined. You know, that focus has been pretty high on that. Does that mean other people do? Yes, but the PGA TOUR focus is really, really right there.

GARY PLAYER: I'll enlarge on that. We have 15 American grandchildren and I put great emphasis on them because I realize what a great -- I realize what a great country America's been and is. And to me, what I see at this College of the Ozarks here is what I try and teach my grandchildren. And their patriotism is a very important thing, and also a prayer is a very important thing. If you look what made America this great country, people working hard, patriotism, sacrificing their lives, having a prayer.

I don't know, is that continuing? I hope so. They're taking down crosses in San Diego. They're taking out the Ten Commandments in other states on a big stone in the town. Where it says, "Thou shalt not kill," what would they like to see, "Thou shalt kill"? Honor thy mother and thy father. Must they not honor their mother and father?

So I stick to those principles and this is what make America great and that's what I learned in questioning about College of the Ozarks. These students are there, it's serving, it's debt free as Jack said. My goodness me, education is the light and America really is falling back in education and the higher echelon. It's 14th ranked in the world and in the lower section it's 23rd. America should be No. 1 across the board in everything they do.

But it's even crept into golf, it's crept into golf. I mean, America lost the Ryder Cup I think eight out of the last 10 times. Now they want to form a panel to try and help them win the Ryder Cup? Just say, "Look, the other guys are better than us, I'm going to practice harder and beat him next time." There's no panel that's going to help them, I'll tell you that.

JACK NICKLAUS: They need a task force? A task force. It's unbelievably great, isn't it? Stupid.

Q. Jack, I remember a couple years ago you were saying that Jordan Spieth came very close to winning the Masters, you thought it was the best thing to happen, you compared it to what happened to you in the 1960 U.S. Open. What was your reaction this time around?

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, I don't think he felt it was the best thing that happened to him, but in many ways I'm not sure that it isn't a good thing for him. What I mean by that is that he's 22 years old. To win a Masters twice at 22 years old, that puts him right at the top of everything. He's got a long future in front of him. He's a very talented young man, he's a nice young man, he's very focused. Winning it twice might take away some of that focus is exactly what I said to you about if I had won the U.S. Open when I was an amateur in 1960, I might not have continued to work because I felt like I'd be scratching my head out here.

Although I know my heart went out to him, he had -- to have that happen, I know that he knows he should never have hit the ball to the right of the bunker. I don't care what kind of swing you put on it on 12, it just happened. But I think that there will be some good that comes out of all bad and I think he will -- although I know he would have liked to have won obviously and a lot of people would have liked to have seen him win, I don't think in the long run that it'll ever hurt him; it will only make his resolve stronger.

GARY PLAYER: He's a tremendous -- as Jack says, a wonderful young man and he's the right type of man you want to have at the head of golf, in the top rankings there because he sets a good example for young people. He didn't play well, that's the reason that he didn't win the last day. As he said himself, he said, "I had my B game going." If you analyze his round shot for shot, he didn't play really the type of golf that you play to win Augusta.

But the thing that's so remarkable, which I admire about him, he's the best putter in the world and I've always said -- Jack always said golf should be called patience. I say golf should be called putting because it's putting that wins the golf tournament. Rory McIlroy and Jason Day, who have a far better swing than Jordan Spieth, he beat him and they played fantastic golf and he came with his B game, which he admitted, and he beat them. So it just shows you the emphasis on putting. He's got a little hitch, in my opinion, in his backswing that I don't quite like. When he gets that right, which he will get right, I'll tell you one thing, this guy's going to set all kinds of records. He's so talented, it's frightening.

Q. (Inaudible) about the fishing trip together, I'm just wondering if it ever happened.

JACK NICKLAUS: No, Gary founded another exhibition he could go play and make another \$30, so we skipped it.

Q. Did you catch anything this week yet?

JACK NICKLAUS: Caught one fish last night, yeah. Only fished for about five minutes. That trip, I can't remember why we canceled that trip, Gary.

GARY PLAYER: Vivian wasn't well. Vivian fell.

JACK NICKLAUS: That's right, she couldn't go. Yeah, his wife hurt herself, she couldn't go. But we'll do it again. Gary and I have been on a lot of trips together, we'll do more.

DAVE SENKO: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.