

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: HAROLD VARNER III
May 3, 2016



MODERATOR: Harold, thank you for joining us today. Two straight top-10s, three for the season. This is your second appearance at Wells Fargo but first as a PGA TOUR member. What does it feel like to come home and play in front of friends and family?

HAROLD VARNER III: It's exciting. I felt the same way as I felt last time. I guess being a member's a little cooler, but I just want to play well in front of people I love. So I'm ready to get the ball rolling. A long week last week, so not doing anything today and then fortunate enough to get in the pro-am tomorrow, so I'll get ready for that.

Q. What has this year been like? Obviously a lot of hard work has paid off, but now you're a pro and how have you dealt with that and how have you dealt with, like I say, it is different this time?

HAROLD VARNER III: It's still golf in my eyes, but obviously I'm pretty fortunate to play golf for a living so just got to keep that perspective. This year's been great. It's been a little bit up and down, missed four cuts in a row, had a bad skid. But I think if you just keep working at it, you're going to work through those down times and that's what happened the last two weeks. I'm coming around and I'm trending in the right direction, which is good.

Q. When that happens, how much do you talk to pros and how much do you look inward and try to find your own way?

HAROLD VARNER III: Well, when you're out there for four weeks, you kind of have to rely on yourself. My caddie always tells me you've got to back yourself, which is something I think everyone should do but I don't do a great job of it all the time because it's been so easy to be able to go see Bruce when things were going bad. But if I tell him I'm hitting it a certain direction, he usually gives me something that I'll get it going.

Q. Is there any specific thing that changed, clicked the last two weeks?

HAROLD VARNER III: I changed putters, which was good. I bought a putter at Edwin Watts at Hilton Head. So putting better and chipping better. Swing wise, nothing major. You get the club on plane, it's going to be hard to miss.

Q. What kind of putter did you buy, and do you typically shop at Edwin Watts?

HAROLD VARNER III: No, I usually go in there and just mess around. I got an Odyssey putter, the one I putted with in college, same face and it's just back to basics. Pretty simple. It makes it way more fun when you're holing putts.

Q. Has life on Tour been what you expected?

HAROLD VARNER III: It's lonely. Everyone kind of does their own thing, which is fine. I can have fun with myself, which is kind of weird. But I didn't realize how people just kind of went about their own way. I think I'm doing a little bit of that myself, which is, you know, I guess good in a way. But I enjoyed the Web.com Tour and mini tours because you always had someone to hang out with, you always had someone to talk to and I thoroughly enjoy that.

Q. When you say it's lonely though, how nice is it then to come home and be around the people that know you?

HAROLD VARNER III: Well, I don't know if that's a great thing for me, but it's going to be crazy. I think it's going to be a lot of fun. It's going to be very hard for me to focus because I just don't do a good job of that, but I'll find a way and we'll have a good time.

Q. There obviously aren't a lot of blacks on the PGA TOUR. How's the reception been for you now that you're on the regular tour, has it been pretty positive for you?

HAROLD VARNER III: Yeah, I haven't had any negative things happen to me. I don't really think about it much. I'm not sure if some of the players do. They treat me as if I was any other color, which is awesome. I think that's how everyone should be treated.

Q. You said before you wanted people to know about your golf?

HAROLD VARNER III: Yeah, for sure. I mean, wouldn't you?

Q. Oh, yeah.

HAROLD VARNER III: It's the same way for me.

Q. When you're on the Web.com Tour, you're trying hard to get here. Now you're here, does it feel different? Do you feel like -- obviously you seem driven to never feel like you're satisfied or arrived, but how has that been to know that the next tournament is ahead and I've got to work to get better? You talked about missing four cuts and you are playing better.

HAROLD VARNER III: My wallet's a little deeper so that helps out. Yeah, it's the same, though; you want to play good golf. I don't care what level you're at right now, you want to play your best. So I'm out on the PGA TOUR and I still want to play my best. I haven't won. Had some great starts but just haven't won. And I didn't win on the Web, so there's always that like back in your mind, like I know I'm good enough to win. So I want to give myself the best chance, whether it's working out whatever swing or sometimes you have to say no, that's kind of hard for me to do. Obviously, I'm growing.

Q. What's the best perk of the PGA TOUR?

HAROLD VARNER III: There's a lot of things. I mean, I just got a brand new car this week, so that's pretty cool. We get one every week. The money's cool. You guys being around watching me is kind of cool. I enjoy that, all these cameras. There's a lot of things that are awesome, but I think the coolest thing is I get to help other people out. Like I get to help my parents if they ever need anything; my sister, anyone that might need some help because there are people that have helped me out along the way to get here.

Q. Have you been pretty conservative spending?

HAROLD VARNER III: No, I'm not conservative at all. If you spend it, you can go make more. They print it every day.

Q. How much of a comfort level has there been looking at just going out there and thinking it automatically happens, has there been some of that?

HAROLD VARNER III: I think the Fry's was huge for me. Get out there and I was like right there. I was like, well, I haven't done anything different. I didn't finish well. I played well enough in the fall season to move up to get into most of the events because I know a lot of guys in the bottom of our category don't get into many events.

I think just starting off, if you start off well and you know you're kind of there, you just keep doing that. If you don't play well, then you're like, Do I need to change something? That's what people have a tendency to do and I think that's easy to do, but I never had that happen until I missed these four cuts. I didn't question if I could do it or not, it was just a matter of getting back on track. You've just got to run your own course and I think the best players in the world do that.

Q. Certainly Gaston County has a tradition and love affair with golf. You're the first technical PGA guy. Does that mean something? And obviously your old high school is doing well and kind of started with your era of guys.

HAROLD VARNER III: I know, but they won four state championships, I won zero.

Q. But you're considered a part of that legacy. How much does that mean to you to kind of carry that torch?

HAROLD VARNER III: It doesn't mean a great deal. I'm just there if they need me, someone to bounce things off of. It's cool to represent something, I'm proud about that. But those guys have to go run their own race, which is -- I don't want, just because I'm on the PGA TOUR, I don't want them to think I've got to do what Harold did because that's not how it works. You've got to go figure out your way.

Q. When you talk about the challenges of playing here, the distractions of staying focused, is it something that you learn kind of year to year getting used to it, is it

something that just comes with experience in how do you handle that?

HAROLD VARNER III: I think it comes with experience. Last time I was here I was like, oh, it will be fine, nonchalantly. Then when the week came and I got on the first tee, I was like this is like way over my head. I think just experience. I think I'll do a lot better this week and, then if something crazy happens, next year I'll come back and I'll figure out how to avoid that.

Q. Was there a time either in any of the last two weeks when you thought, hey, I can win this, and what did you learn from that?

HAROLD VARNER III: The last two weeks I felt like I've had a chance, I just haven't really had a chance like with nine holes to go. I always had a chance like with 18 to go but you want a legit shot at it. Five holes left either leading or one or two back would be ideal, and I just need to keep getting there, like we talked about experience. That's a priceless thing.

Q. Obviously your gallery was big two years ago. What do you expect it to be this time around and obviously a lot of familiar faces?

HAROLD VARNER III: I hope the same but I'll do a better job of ignoring them. I have a few friends that like to have a little fun and I paid them a lot of attention, which was something that's not good. And if I want to go accomplish what I want to accomplish, just quiet the noise and take care of business. We'll have fun afterwards. I'll have plenty of time down the road when I'm like 50, 55, I can just sit back and relax.

Q. What do you think about this course and the challenges this course presents?

HAROLD VARNER III: You've got to hit it well, you've got to hit it really well. That's exciting because I'm hitting it pretty well. Getting myself out of jams when I miss a few greens which just keeps the momentum of the round going. And like any golf course, you just figure out a game plan, you go try to execute it.

MODERATOR: Thanks, Harold. Play well this week.