

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: STEVE WHEATCROFT**  
**May 5, 2016**



**Q. Great round of golf today, you and Andrew kind of side by side making birdies. You made a couple eagles. Dennis Paulson wanted me to ask you when is the last time you had two eagles in the same round?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Ironically enough I think it was here. It was a while ago. I remember birdieing or eagling -- making eagle on 7 and 15 here years ago. I actually thought about that today after I made the second one.

Yeah, it doesn't happen very often so I'll take it when I can get it. I made a couple bogeys out there so always nice to throw in eagles to offset those. But yeah, Loupe and I just kept feeding off each other all day long. He was rolling in putt after putt at the beginning. I think he had six putts through seven holes at one point today. We were making jokes about it and luckily I started pouring it in after that. I drove it way better than I've been driving it. I've been hitting the driver terribly and just not been making many putts. Those were probably the two best parts of my game today.

**Q. You fought hard down the Green Mile. Short of the green left at 16 and a great up-and-down at 17.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, I just had a real goofy lie at on 16 where the ball was above my feet dead downwind. I just didn't feel comfortable trying to hit a little cut in there so I tried to take a little less club and just hammer a draw and I just caught the heel and flipped it. Just a bad shot.

No. 17 I thought I hit a pretty good 5-iron, the wind just took it a touch right and it was enough to miss the green. Luckily, I poured in a great putt from the fringe there.

And then 18, same thing. We just got fooled a little bit on the wind. It was blowing pretty hard down there and I hit what I thought was a really good 6-iron and just went right through the wind or the wind stopped but managed to get it down in two. They're hard holes. I was happy to get out of there even par for sure.

**Q. What did you think of the course conditions out there today?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** It's great. They got hammered with rain on Monday and Tuesday and there was a lot of water out there on Tuesday. And it's definitely still soft, but the greens are firm but receptive. It's playing very nicely right now.

**Q. 65, excellent to watch, followed the momentum in your group. You must be delighted after that.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, I'm very pleased. Obviously anything under par is great on this golf course. To get the momentum going and see the putts falling again was great. And yeah, we just -- Andrew and I kind of fed off each other all day, he got off to a really hot start making birdies. I chipped in at the 5th for eagle and just kind of got it rolling after that.

**Q. Two eagles on your scorecard, always very nice. We're going to show you the final few holes, a couple of big moments here. This is at 15.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, this putt is lightening fast. I wasn't sure if it was going to get there or not and it just kept dribbling out and dribbling out. Luckily, managed to catch that right center of the hole, so I was very happy to come back after the bad bogey at 14 and come right back with one at 15.

**Q. And you were thinking I've got the Green Mile now, 16,17 and 18. To get through that level par and this big moment here at 17?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, this was great. I thought I hit a better 5-iron than this and I just miss-hit the chip a little bit. I didn't clip it to get the spin on it. But I left myself in a good spot underneath the hole and putting straight up the hill, I knew I had a good look, and I had been reading the greens beautifully all day.

**Q. You play the Tour a lot. As I said, your lowest round here, you love the course anyway?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** I love it a lot more after shooting 65. I played it a lot better before they lengthened out a few of these holes. I haven't played quite as well the last few years, I think I finished mid 30s, 40s last year. Yeah, nice to see birdies go in again and nice to post a good number.

**Q. And steady stuff this season without anything spectacular. Reflecting on that, what do you --**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** That's a nice way to put it. It's been a bad year. Just things just haven't gone my way and I haven't put a good tournament together yet. I know I'm playing better, I've made six straight cuts. I haven't done anything with any one of them. I know it's getting there, it's close so I'll just keep fighting. I've been down this road so many times, nothing surprises me anymore.

**Q. Next week, your first PLAYERS in your hometown. Hitting form at just the right time?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** I hope so. Yeah, I hope that I can put three more rounds together here and go down there on a high. But yeah, I'm very excited. I've been living in Jacksonville for 10 years now, I've never gotten to play THE PLAYERS so I'm very excited. I know I'm going to have a bunch of friends and family out there following around, so it will

be a circus but it will be fun.

**Q. Great first round, how do you feel out there.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** I'm excited. Obviously I haven't put together a low round this year, and to go out there and make a couple eagles and bunch of birdies, throw in a couple bogeys, I'm very pleased obviously.

**Q. How was the course? Got a lot of rain this week, was kind of raining on and off today, the weather was a little bit chillier than normal. How did that affect you?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** It definitely dried up quite a bit since Tuesday. Fairways are still soft but you're starting to get a couple bounces here and there. The greens are not soft but they're not firm, they're very receptive. You can definitely kind of control the spin going in. But yeah, the course is in great shape as always. They do a wonderful job here at Quail Hollow year after year and same this year.

**Q. Talk about your overall experience here at the Wells Fargo Championship. It's obviously a huge event, they put a lot of effort into it. How's your week been so far in Charlotte?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** It's wonderful as always. This is probably my favorite event of the year. They treat you well here. You get the little butterflies when you get into the city and see everything again. This is probably one of my favorite golf courses we play all year so I'm just excited to be back in Charlotte.

**Q. Kind of a roller coaster round out there, ended at 7 under, talk about your round a little bit.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, definitely a roller coaster. Off to a great start, hit two good shots on 1, made a great putt. Bad shot on 2, just a bad swing, made bogey there, should have made par, missed about a four-footer. Then a couple good pars on 3 and 4. Chipped in on 5 for eagle, it was great, laid. It up to the right of the bunker which is about the only angle I had but I knew it was going to be a fairly simple pitch across the green. Obviously I wasn't planning on pitching it in but nice momentum boost. Two good shots on 7, made birdie with a two-putt. Great little putt on 8, Andrew kind of gave me the line there. Great 3-wood on 10. I can't remember what the number was, hit 270 or something like that to the flag and just a great 3-wood there to about six feet, made eagle there. That really got me going, thought this could be a special round if I could get it going.

Bad swing on 11, didn't think the shot through enough, made par. Great birdie on 12. Made a bad mistake on 14 can't miss that shot left and I knew that. Was trying to aim it out to the right, just came out knuckling a little bit. The wind was more right to left than we thought it was. No excuses, just a terrible shot. Can't do that in that situation.

Luckily, I bounced back with a good birdie on 15 with a really really fast putt. Then got through the Green Mile. Wasn't my most solid three holes I played all day but I'll take it. Three pars are three pars, they feel like birdies.

**Q. 6 under par on the par 5s today. That's not every day.**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** No, that's a first for me, I'm guessing. Yeah, like I said, the pitch-in was great there on 5. Two-putt on 7, kind an easy tap-in birdie there. The eagle obviously was a six-foot big curler but managed to get that one in. And then 15, another good putt. So when I play well I usually attack the par 5s. I'm not the longest guy by any means, I'm very mediocre with my distance, but I usually find ways to play par 5s well when I score well.

**Q. You were saying it seemed like you guys were kind of feeding off each other. He went bogey-free with seven birdies and you were eagling and birdieing. It was kind of a give and take?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yeah, very much so. He got off to a great start. We were laughing about his putting stats, I think he had six putts through seven holes, something like that. It was goofy. He was pouring them in everywhere. We definitely did feed off each other. It's nice to see guys making birdies. When you look at the standard bearer sign it says 2, 3, 5 under, things like that. It just kind of gets you in that mindset of making birdies, where if you get in a group where guys are making pars and bogeys, you think the course is playing harder than it is.

**Q. Continuing this tomorrow will be easy, hard?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** It's obviously going to be hard to follow up 65 with another 65. I'm going to go out and give it what I can. It's going to be cold in the morning, I know that. Obviously it won't be playing quite as fast in the fairways. But yeah, I'm going to come out and keep doing what I was doing. I drove the ball really well today. I'll try to keep it in play, try to give myself birdie putts. I read the greens beautifully today and I rolled in a lot of putts. I know that doesn't happen every day, but at the same time I know that I've had big putting weeks in the past where I've done it for four straight days. So one for one and we'll see the next three rounds, how they go.

**Q. You've had a lot of made cuts, not necessarily a lot of high finishes lately. Have you been feeling you're close to a low round and maybe even a low finish in a tournament?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** I'd like to think so. I felt great. I had two good rounds in Hilton Head and then had a terrible weekend. I had two good rounds last week and then a very mediocre third round. I haven't put a good tournament together all year. It's been a very poor year in my standards after last year having a pretty good year out here for me. I had higher expectations this year and it's been a big letdown. But at the same time I've been

working hard on some swing changes. I had knee surgery in the offseason. So I knew it wasn't going to come back quickly, but I'm also very impatient and I want it to come yesterday. I don't know, I'm just going to keep playing every round. I've got a bunch of tournaments left this year. Try to turn the season around, lot of golf left.

**Q. Heard you say over here you've always loved playing here. What is it that you like about Charlotte?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Just a fun golf course. They've lengthened it out now where it's not quite as fun for me. It's just a fun golf course. You can get the par 5s. Obviously I did today. I'm very average length-wise out here and if I can play them 6 under, anybody can play them 6 under. But it's a fun golf course. It's always in great shape, has that classic look and feel to it. The fairways are always in pristine shape, the greens are running at 12 or 13. Whatever they are out there, they're lightening fast. I grew up playing in Pittsburgh and played a lot at Oakmont and this reminds me a lot of the look and the green speeds and the slope and things like that. I love everything about this place. I love the golf course, I love the town, the restaurants in the area. I mean, everything about it.

**Q. You mentioned the knee injury. What was the extent of it, the surgery, and how long were you out?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Just a knee scope, my right knee. I was only out for a couple weeks. I had to withdraw from Mississippi in the fall, and then I played the last two events kind of hobbling a little bit and then I had surgery the day before Thanksgiving. I think I was out about two weeks, then started back slowly hitting balls again. It wasn't anything drastic, it was just kind of a clean-up on a meniscus tear, things like that. Made some swing changes as well and it took a long time to kind of get things going and it just hasn't clicked. Hopefully, soon.

**Q. You're from Indiana, Pennsylvania, but you went to Indiana University?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** Yep, very random fact. I was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania. Small little town there. I still have family that live there. My parents lived there for about six months and then we moved down to a town called Washington, Pennsylvania, just south of Pittsburgh. I lived there until I was 18 and went to Indiana University out in Bloomington, Indiana, for college. So yeah, just ironic twist of fate there.

**Q. Not a coincidence?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** I'm sorry?

**Q. Coincidence or no?**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** No, just random. I just loved Bobby Knight and the Hoosiers, loved watching them. And I knew they had a great business school so I never thought in a

million years I'd play golf. Luckily, the coach, after me bugging him for I think he turned me down six or seven times, I lost count, but he finally let me walk on. I went there to get a business degree and luckily golf turned around and I started to get a little bit better.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

**STEVE WHEATCROFT:** (inaudible) on 14, I came back and hit a great drive on 15, one of the best I hit all day. Pulled a 3-wood a little bit, I think it might have clipped a tree and stayed in the rough. Was kind of an awkward number, about 53 yards and just didn't want to do anything goofy with it so I just threw it on the green. And I knew if I could get it a little past the hole it would be fast but it wouldn't break a whole lot either. Read it absolutely perfectly, just tapped it, got it started and it went right in the right center of the hole and that was that. So it was a great bounce back for me, for sure.