

MICHAEL BALIKER: So we would like to welcome Rocco Mediate to the Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS Championship. Rocco's coming off his first major victory on the PGA TOUR Champions at the Senior PGA Championship, tournament record-setting 19-under-par performance.

Rocco, if you just want to comment briefly on last week and your thoughts heading into this week.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Two weeks ago, you mean.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Two weeks ago, yes.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yes. It was weird, freaky and cool. I don't use the word "trending" because everybody else does, but I was getting better. You know, you can't expect that to happen. I've done it before but it was good to be back in that situation. With Colin and Bernhard obviously right on your heels, it was fun, fun to somehow hold them off. I have no idea how that happened but I'm glad we were done after that last hole.

Q. (Question regarding Rocco's short game.)

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah, it covered up -- yeah, it always does cover up mistakes, but it's been real tight lately over the last couple months, couple years. Putting got really good and I sprinkled a few good shots. Drove good, drove well two weeks ago so I was in the middle of most of the fairways. I missed six fairways that week so I had my opportunities. And if I missed, it was in the right spot. And that golf course, if you miss in the right spot you can play all day with it, but if you don't, you just can't play, and I didn't miss very many in the wrong spot for the whole week.

Q. Those greens are, whatever word you want to describe it?

ROCCO MEDIATE: It's crazy, crazy.

Q. A lot of times players get in those situations and they beat themselves because they hate the golf course, they hate the greens. Were you just in a position in life that you just couldn't afford to take --

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, that's actually true of most people but Montgomerie said, Colin said something, we were putting on the green on Wednesday. Was it Wednesday? I think it was Wednesday night. Tuesday or Wednesday. We were putting and Colin was out there and

we were laughing and he goes -- because he had one there two years before that, which makes sense because as precise as he is, I can see why he'd win there. But he says, The key to this golf course obviously is fairways, but -- and I'm listening to him, we were just kind of joking around but I listened to him. But he goes, You can't be past the flagstick ever, you have to be pin high or short.

I thought about it for a second and I went, that's genius because we get -- if you get aggressive and miss, you're making bogey or worse. So most of the week I never was -- I mean a couple times obviously, but most of the time I missed, when I missed it was where I could actually play from. Hard shots some, sometimes real easy, and it worked out that way. You thought about it because there's so many quadrants in those greens. I think that's what Jack really wanted, he wanted to see -- because he gave you big -- fairways were not small but some of them were tough, some of them weren't, but into the greens it was as brutal as it can get if you miss, miss in the wrong place. And I didn't miss in the wrong place very often. A few times, but I had stupid really good pitch shots and got up and down.

Q. So did you cut Colin in on your first place check for 10 percent?

ROCCO MEDIATE: Colin's just fine with money, Colin's fine with cash. We don't have to worry about him, he's fine.

Q. Rocco, were you able to play a practice round here yesterday?

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, I only played a few holes. I got in yesterday at -- when did I get in yesterday, like 1:00, 2:00.

Q. And you got 15 in today?

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah, 16.

Q. Just your impressions of the course, what do you think about it and have you ever been here before?

ROCCO MEDIATE: No, but I've read about this place and I read about the redo, and I'm a Tilly fan so I read his books and I read his theories and everything that he does. Tillinghast and George Thomas, and Raynor, too. But Tilly and George Thomas are my two favorite architects. I belong out at Bel-Air, which is a Thomas golf course. He built Riv, Bel-Air, and L.A. North and South. And then obviously Tilly built this but this was his favorite design and this is where he lived.

But if I think about that comment, think about the golf courses Tillinghast has built. This is his favorite design. And the redo, I didn't see it before but I know they restored it back to what he wanted, they made it a little bit longer apparently, I guess. Maybe they didn't, but they probably did. But it looks like he built it in 1922. I mean, Winged Foot, Quaker Ridge, San Francisco Golf, Somerset, I mean all these courses are remarkable but the fact that this

was his favorite is cool. So I've studied this place. This place is hard, it's a hell of a golf course.

Q. And what do you like most about the characteristics?

ROCCO MEDIATE: Well, I played a Tilly golf course in Minneapolis, in -- Golden Valley in Minnesota called Golden Valley Country Club and he built that while he was building Rochester Hills Country Club -- Rochester Country Club in Rochester, Minnesota. So he was kind of back and forth between and they all look the same and they all -- his characteristics, they're genius, but he never liked you to go past the back edge of the green. Hated it. If you did, you had to make a big number. And he also gave you tilt and slope on the greens, and bunkers that were -- like Thomas' bunkers were flashed. Billy Bell did all his bunkering work so he flashed it up to the top.

Well, Tilly didn't like that because that made it easier. He played you from flat bunkers with grass faces just like this. So he wanted you to put the ball in the air out of the bunkers. Genius idea. Back then, think about back then, though. They didn't have sand wedges, so you're trying to do it with 9- and 8-irons whatever you called them back then getting them out of these bunkers. It's hard enough with a sand wedge now.

So I just like the way he built his golf courses and the fact that pretty much every one of his courses hold up to this day and age just tells you the story.

Q. How much did you play around here as an amateur?

ROCCO MEDIATE: I didn't play here at all. I played Sunnybrook in the State Amateur one year. I played at several -- I don't remember all the names, it's been so long. I played a bunch of golf courses in this area. I played Merion just only once, this was back in probably the mid 2000s. Aronimink, which I liked a lot. I liked Merion a lot, too. Aronimink I loved. I don't know why I liked it more, but it's bigger, bigger. But this is my favorite of all of them so far. It is. I couldn't wait to see it. I went through the video stuff that they did with the redo and wanted to see what they did and they restored so many things that were gone, covered by trees, bushes and stuff. They opened it all up. Genius.

Q. What are your thoughts about golf courses that take out a lot of trees just for growing or whatever?

ROCCO MEDIATE: Well, trees, you can't grow grass under them, that's the problem. Most of the courses that were built in the early '20s, there were no trees on this property when he built this golf course. All of a sudden, like I remember I was reading a story that the ridge on -- I don't know what hole it is because I don't know the golf course that well, but they went, I can't believe you built that ridge. He goes, that ridge has been here since 1922, it was just covered up with crap, trees. So now it opens up everything. If you look at the golf course from the clubhouse, you can see a lot of it. That's what he envisioned. Everybody wants to plant trees, and trees are fine, I have no issues with trees but it takes away from

the beauty of it in my opinion.

Q. What do you remember most about the '94 Open with Arnold?

ROCCO MEDIATE: It was our home. You know, it was his last Open, but I remember every -- my back was so bad. I had surgery a month later. That's when I had my surgery, July 12 of '94, which is about a month after that Open.

When they told me, the USGA called and said, Hey, we're going to pair you -- because I was exempt for the Open, we're going to pair you with Mr. Palmer, I wasn't going to -- I wasn't going to play Westchester, which was I think before the Open if I recall back then. But I was out -- I played Tucson in February and I didn't play again, I couldn't even move. But when I heard this news, I was trying to get back and I didn't want to have surgery and when they said I was paired with Mr. Palmer I went, oh, I'm playing. I'll crawl around if I have to crawl around.

Played Westchester, did okay, made the cut and did okay. Then I went in there just through 27 holes I was like three out of the lead with him. Everybody -- there was nobody watching anybody else but him. I know they weren't watching me.

But I remember the hole, the last hole, the whole scenario, the comments, the people, everything. Everything. I remember the whole -- and we walked on the green, I stopped 75 yards out and I stopped my caddie Kenny and Mahaffey and his caddie stopped and we said, let's just watch this. We just stood there going, it was unbelievable, as it should have been. But it was unbelievable what was going on.

Then we got on the green and I somehow two-putted from above the hole for par and he just missed the par putt and I went up and he kind of hugged me and I said, This is all because of you, and that was when he went bye-bye, lost it. He started crying. I got him good there, yeah, I got him good there. Then he went in the press room, obviously you saw that.

But he's always been that way, though. He's always been so emotional. That was his last Open. I mean, he had a lot of last events but over the last 10 or 15 years when he didn't play, it killed him, it kills him, it just kills him. We played a lot of golf together. Very fortunate.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Thanks, Rocco.