

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW: GENE SAUERS
August 27, 2016



DAVE SENKO: Well, Gene. followed up your 65 with a 5-under 67 and go into tomorrow with a two-shot lead. Looked like just one bogey so far at No. 3.

GENE SAUERS: I made bogey on 10 also.

DAVE SENKO: Oh, there, yeah, 10.

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, 10. I just concentrated on hitting the ball solid, trying to keep it in the fairways and give myself opportunities just like I try to do every week. I had opportunities to make the putts and I made a few today, missed a few. I made a couple stupid -- my two bogeys were kind of stupid bogeys on No. 3, was it?

DAVE SENKO: Yeah.

GENE SAUERS: No. 3 I was in the right rough and I had an 8-iron and I was just trying to go right at the pin instead of taking it to the right and I pulled it to the left bunker and hit a poor bunker shot and made bogey there.

Then I followed up with birdie on the next hole. Hit a 9-iron probably seven feet I imagine below the hole, made birdie there. And 6, the par 3, I hit a 6-iron or 5-iron. I can't remember what I hit there, 5-iron maybe. Made a good putt, just past pin high and I was probably a 25-footer there for birdie.

DAVE SENKO: And then 10.

GENE SAUERS: 10 I made bogey. Hit a hybrid off the tee, great position, had a 9-iron and just pulled it a little left and I was just -- I wasn't but 20 feet away from the pin and I decided to putt it and I putted it a little too hard, I was trying to get it through the fringe and hit a little too hard, got a little too aggressive and knocked it by about eight feet past the hole and kind of lipped it out coming back.

DAVE SENKO: Then you finished with four of the last five holes starting at No. 14.

GENE SAUERS: No. 14, yeah, I hit a hybrid off the tee, pitching wedge within probably three, four feet there, made birdie. Then driver, 3-wood right in front of the green on the par 5 and chipped it up. Didn't hit a very good chip, I left myself probably about a six-footer and made it. And then the next one was the par 4, I hit another pitching wedge -- 3-wood, pitching wedge about, I was probably about 10 feet. And 17 made a good putt there, hit 6-iron there. And 18 hit a 5-iron in the middle of the green left and two-putted. Just solid playing, that's what I'm going to try to do tomorrow and just see what happens.

DAVE SENKO: How's the wrist feel?

GENE SAUERS: You know, it's a little better today than it was the first days, but they're doing that ultrasound on it and putting this on it which kind of helps a little bit. Hopefully I can go next week. I'll see what happens tomorrow so I can't make any promises yet.

DAVE SENKO: You alluded to this earlier this year with your putting, maybe just if you could kind of give us a recollection of your putting woes and what straightened things out for you.

GENE SAUERS: Right. My whole career I've always been a good ball striker and my whole career's been on putting, just couldn't get them in the hole, three-putting, just ridiculous. It was so bad, that's what mainly kind of drove me away from the game, I was so frustrated with it.

I got a putting green, a synthetic turf green in my backyard. My wife goes back there and putts with me, she putts cross-handed. I've got all these devices, the chalk line, the little blast thing on the end and trying to figure all this stuff out. She comes out there cross-handed. "Do it just like that, Gene, do it just like that." Makes me all mad.

I didn't pay much attention to her, but then the years go by, years go by, we keep doing it and she goes and beats my butt on the putting green. I said, you know, I want to try this. So I got on the putting green, I started hitting a few of them, didn't feel too good, I don't know if I can do this or not and kept with it, kept with it, and thank goodness I did. Houston was my first tournament this year in Houston.

Q. So you're putting cross-handed now?

GENE SAUERS: Cross-handed, right.

Q. That's because your wife --

GENE SAUERS: Pretty much told me to. I mean, I had to do something; the other way was awful.

Q. Starting this year?

GENE SAUERS: In Houston, yes, sir.

DAVE SENKO: May.

GENE SAUERS: Yep.

Q. On Wednesday you didn't sound like a very confident person about playing well

this week. Are you pretty surprised where you're at? If it be told you Wednesday that you would be leading, would you have believed it?

GENE SAUERS: Kind of. Well, kind of. Well, no. Coming in this week I was not too confident. You know, I didn't play -- I played one time at home because of my wrist and trying to heal it. I didn't know what to expect coming into this week. But I just won the U.S. Open prior to that, so that kind of builds confidence also. I'm doing the same thing I did that week. I told my caddie during that week, I said, We've just got to take it back kind of smooth and have a good shoulder turn, and that's all I'm doing this week. Sometimes when I hit the ball right or left, I don't make a good turn at it, and this week I'm trying to just make a good turn and just letting it go.

Q. Sounds like it's better than what it was on Wednesday. It's definitely improved, right?

GENE SAUERS: It's better. I played on Wednesday and then I hit balls on Thursday and it started feeling better, so yeah, it was all good.

Q. What's your wife's first name?

GENE SAUERS: Tammy.

Q. You're obviously in a pretty good groove right now other than the shoulder turn. Does anything feel different?

GENE SAUERS: Anything feel different? No, not really. I just, you know, I guess I'm just playing on a lot of confidence. Winning the U.S. Open and having all my buddies telling me that you should win four, five times out here, more and more, when you first came out here. I think they believed in me more than I did but maybe it's rubbing off now. But the putting has been the big key. I'm making putts now where before I wasn't making anything and it's just falling into place.

Q. Given the magnitude of that tournament, was that your best moment in golf?

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, I think so in golf, yes. Winning a major championship, yeah. Puts me in that category with all those other big names.

Q. So if you could win this one, what would that, how meaningful would that be?

GENE SAUERS: It would be great. Maybe shows it wasn't a fluke when I won a couple weeks ago. Maybe making a statement.

Q. Bernhard turned 59 today.

GENE SAUERS: Right.

Q. He admitted he's going to try to shoot 59.

GENE SAUERS: He can do it.

Q. Do you think it can be done on this golf course?

GENE SAUERS: On this golf course, I'll have to say no. Greens are tough, greens are tough to read. I don't think you can do it on this golf course. But he's a robot, he's liable to do anything. (Laughs.)

Q. So six of the last seven winners here have been leading off of the third (sic) round. Do you feel pretty good about your spot?

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, I'm sure I'll be playing with my buddy Joe tomorrow. Just kind of do the same strategy, just try to hit fairways and greens and give myself opportunities, that's all I can do.

Q. I asked Joe this question earlier. Obviously a lot of guys with a chance to win it, which is exciting for the fans.

GENE SAUERS: Right.

Q. What's it like for you guys?

GENE SAUERS: Being so tight?

Q. Yeah.

GENE SAUERS: Well, it makes you kind of not let up, I guess. I mean, we're not running away with it by no means. You just don't want to let your guard down. You've always got to keep the pedal to the metal, you know what I mean? Just keep on going and see what happens when we add them all up.