
AMANDA HERRINGTON: Welcome to the 2017 Farmers Insurance Open. Coming into this tournament, you'll notice we've undergone a renovation here at the North Course and we're fortunate enough to have Tom Weiskopf with us here this morning to answer a few of your questions.

I know you've spoken to the media on several occasions. So far renovations are well received from players who have been out to the course. So with that, I will ask the media to go ahead and start with questions for Tom.

Q. How much more difficult do you expect the course to play?

TOM WEISKOPF: Oh, there's a question I don't know the answer only because of the weather conditions that we're existing right now. So can they get out there and mow the fairways? That's something. So that could be determined lift, clean and place, which makes it easier. So there's a lot of factors into that. I don't think it's going to be -- I don't know, I never looked at it. I never really ever looked at the past scoring comparisons to the South to the North. I was driven by the fact that there are 80,000 rounds of golf that are played on that golf course, the North. Not all 18, obviously. So it's a very impacted facility.

The importance was the update and deciding to change the North to 21st century standards in regards to specifications, you know. All new green complexes with USGA spec'd conditions existing underneath the grass. A new grass was chosen that was really perfected in California and, you know, used for about a three, four-year period in this state called OO7. I was unfamiliar with it. I didn't know anything about it, but so far that's proven to be a very good choice. A sub-air system was put in. That helps this condition that exists right now with the moisture, trying to get it dry. But my design over 30 years has always been driven by not just the 80,000 rounds of golf that are played here; the fact that there are 25 million golfers in the United States.

That's anyone defined by the National Golf Foundation, anyone male or female that plays six rounds of golf in his or her season. Now, these are pretty strong statistics. Ninety percent of 25 million people that play this game do not break 90. 50 percent of the 90 percent don't break 100. One half of one percent, assuming they play by the rules of course, that's 125,000 break 80. So that definition tells you it's a very hard game. It's a very difficult game. It's a game that requires a lot of time to play.

So I looked at the golf course that existed that was built in the late '50s. Not a lot was done to it previous to that, so we had a chance to do something. What do I do? So I looked at 60 bunkers that existed previously and I decided to eliminate 18 of them, so now we have 42,

21 on each nine.

Strategically, they are located either in the driving landing area on each hole, not every hole though, and around the green. And I am a disciple of MacKenzie and his definition of a strategic bunker is one that must be avoided but is there to make awareness of the challenge of the golf hole. So try to not put yourself in that situation, but it gives definition of strategy to the golf hole, either from the tee shot, to the tee shot, and then from there, from the landing area into the green.

So the hardest shot -- I played this game a long time and the hardest shot for the average person to play is a bunker shot, whether it's around the green or playing out of a fairway bunker. So I changed my philosophy. I originally was going to have 60 and I whittled it down to 42.

So in regards to your question about is it going to be harder? We added 200 yards of length, though, and they're significant on certain holes. Four of the five par 4s are long par 4s. We lengthened the new fourth hole because we changed the routing from about 425 to about, I don't know what the yardage is now, I wasn't around when they put out the new scorecard. It should be about 470. Does anyone have a scorecard? But it's a long hole No. 4. We added length not from the tee shot standpoint. We moved the green back about 30 or 40 yards. We were able to do that. We had enough room to do that.

The par 5s are the easy part of this golf course. They always have been, they always will, because they're in the 520 to 540 range, three of the four. The longest one we lengthened, which is the old 18th hole, which is now the ninth hole, about 565. So for the field, on paper those are reachable for two thirds of the field. Some of the field can reach all four of them, so three of the four are reachable.

So what I did, I looked at the four par 3s and I got enough length on all four par 3s to exceed 200 yards, at least from a starting point on up to the third hole, which is about 235 uphill. And so to balance the golf course when the par 5s are easy for these guys, statistically each week they are the most under, you know, par played holes. That's the balance of this golf course. If the field staff sets it up where four of them are right anywhere from 200 to 225, that's not a long -- it's long for most of us, it's still long for me today. But for those guys it's, you know, 7-irons, 6-irons, 5-irons. That's a good challenge.

So then you look at the five longest par 4s. They are 2, 4, 13, 14 and 18. So you have nine holes that really control the scoring on this golf course.

The easy part of the golf course where scoring is going to happen for the players are going to be 5 through 11. Those are the scoring holes. So if you don't pick up your strokes, you're going to have --

But I'm not worried about scoring. I mean, those guys, those guys are so good at what they do, why not applaud if somebody really plays a sensational round? Why not award him the

congratulations, well played, you know?

I'm worried about 80,000 rounds of golf, trying to make people that come here to play make it a point to play the North Course now, not avoid playing it. You know, come here for a weekend and play 36 holes and enjoy it. You know, I'm not worried about what they shoot.

Only time will tell, but the one thing I do know, we talked about this, the Tour and I talked about this, the easy way to kind of make the scoring be a little closer between the North and the South is to change the North from a par 72 to a par 70, changing 5 to a long four, and No. 17, the new 17th to a long four. Then you've got a heck of a challenge. But you don't have to do that, it's insignificant. Nobody remembers what anybody shoots anymore, it's who won. That's the way it should be. It has good strategic value. It has a good challenge in shot-making ability, and only time will tell. I don't know, I think it's probably two or three strokes easier than the South, but that's a U.S. Open course. That's 7600 yards. We're 7200. I wouldn't worry about, you know, what they shoot. Let's make sure the guys enjoy it and the ones that didn't come this year want to come next year. That's the important thing about all this. I hope I answered that question. It was very long winded, but anyway...

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We'll try and get through a few more.

Q. Tom, will you be soliciting player feedback, and in general, do you have an interest in what Tour players say about your work?

TOM WEISKOPF: Well, sure, I would. You know, I don't know how I'm going to get it. I guess it's just by calling the powers that be, the Tour, you know. They'll have a survey out, I'm sure, after this event's played, what you liked, what you didn't like.

I was one of those players. I was a hard guy to -- because I was a traditional, liking the old golf course style when I played, you know?

But I would definitely like to hear the input in everything, but I don't set the -- let's be clear: I have nothing to do with what pin placements they should be using or what length they should be playing. I just look at it as to what I tried to accomplish. There's a lot of pin placements and that might be the challenge for the Tour this week. There's multiple options where previously on the North Course, because of the severity of the pitch and the contour that was in those greens and the smallness -- we went from 4,500 average to 6,000 and they were heavily contoured by pitch. They represented that traditional time in our history of everything drained from back to front or side to side.

So we don't do that anymore. We tend to take the water, the drainage on the greens, in at least two minimal directions, sometimes three. But they're not heavily contoured. There's three or four greens that have some contour that you have to be aware of and worry about a little bit. They say the green speeds will get about 12. That's not fearful for those guys. So only time will tell.

But yeah, I can only get better if I don't listen to what those that play the game at the highest level think about it and I don't worry about some of the comments. I've dealt with that at Scottsdale, you know. I was one of those critical players. I had enough controversy as a player, believe, I don't want any more as a designer.

Q. Tom, did you have an opinion as to the profile of the North Course versus the South Course coming into the project and did you do anything to try to narrow whatever perceived gap there was?

TOM WEISKOPF: Well, that's a good question. I look at golf courses a lot of different ways, but I look at the aesthetic quality that each course can offer. When you create aesthetic value by having big, mature trees, beautiful vistas, water features and bunker styles, that creates the beauty of the golf course, I think.

How could you find a better piece of property than this piece of property for 36 holes of golf? And the reason why I changed the routing was I think the brand is that ocean out there. You know, standing on various tees and looking down the coastline at San Diego and La Jolla and all that, the ocean and the waves and the whales and all that.

So, you know, the North Course actually in my estimation has more views in relationship to the ravines than the South. There are seven holes on the existing new change of the back nine of the North Course that are impacted by views of the ocean and the ravines. The only two holes that don't have, you know, that existence what I'm talking about is holes 18, and I guess you would say, I don't know, maybe there's eight holes because the new 14th, when you play your second shot, you have a vista of the ocean as the backdrop right there.

You know, we lost over 50 trees here, too, because of the beetle impact here. We planted some, but the thing I'm most proud about is it was done on time and on budget. I'm proud about that anytime you can accomplish that.

Q. Tom, have you heard from Phil? He was obviously the one who started the whole project. Have you heard from Phil, any feedback?

TOM WEISKOPF: Phil and I talked about it this summer, the week before he went to the Open Championship at the Yellowstone Club where we both are members. That's a mountain golf course that I did and we talked about he just simply said, What did you try to do? I said, I tried to keep it a user friendly golf course. He said, That's what I was trying to do. He said, Did you change the routing at all? I said, The only thing we did was flip-flop the nines and we changed the existing eighth hole to now the new 17th by simply moving the green back to where the old back tee used to be, and I kept the contours of the greens modest per se. And he said, Good. He said, I'm anxious to play it.

That's all it was. We didn't talk about -- he was the obvious choice to me, but I didn't make that decision. I don't know why he was eliminated from that process, but it had something to do with being a resident, I don't know, of San Diego. I don't know. It was that quick and

then he went on to chip one in and show me how bad my short game is. You know, gave me a lesson.

Q. Mr. Weiskopf, a very personal question for you, sir.

TOM WEISKOPF: Sure.

Q. Do you think what you've done here would justify calling this the new North Course?

TOM WEISKOPF: Absolutely. I'll tell you why? We have 18 new tee complexes. We have many more tee locations for any type of player to play. The only thing that we could not -- we were restricted in not doing, we never touched a fairway. The corridor, the routing, like I said, the old routing is excellent from the standpoint of change of direction and utilizing the terrain. It was a Billy Bell or Bobby Bell, you know, I thought the routing was very good.

All new green complexes, new bunkering, new specifications, new cart path, new irrigation system. I don't think it meets the definition of remodel or redesign. It's a new golf course basically, yes.

Q. So you don't object to people referring to it as the new North?

TOM WEISKOPF: No. Sounds good to me.

Q. Tom, is there any concern with putting surfaces on two different courses with two different grasses?

TOM WEISKOPF: Well, I think eventually it will lead to the possibility, if this is successful, this grass, and time only tells. Usually when you have a new grass. There's a three- to five-year period, you know, where you don't want to pioneer. This has been out for three to five years through California and other places. It's a very popular grass of choice.

I don't make those choices. I try to cover my rear-end by having somebody else, the Tour chose that. So I think it's going to lead into possibly change -- if it's what they think it is, it will eventually lead to the South Course. I think that's a possibility. It would be easier for the total maintenance practices of this.

When we chose the sand, for example, we went to the same sand they use on the South course. We had two good choices and that's a good sand so we decided to just make that process a little bit easier, too. I don't know. You know, I don't make those decisions. I always have somebody else a lot smarter than I am making those decisions.

Q. From a player's perspective, will it be tough to go --

TOM WEISKOPF: Oh, you mean from the player's standpoint. These guys are so good at

what they do, they have a new big putting green over there, they just walk over there the day before they're going to play or today and they'll putt on that. They'll figure it out real quick, they're that good at what they do. This isn't new to them. Last week they played, what, three different golf courses?

The more important thing is the speed. It will probably be a little bit of a challenge this year because they haven't played enough rounds on this golf course, but after a couple years of playing here, they'll figure out how to play each hole real easy. The breaks will be a little less severe. So my advice is if you see some break, play less break.

Q. Did you try to make the greens slope away from the ocean?

TOM WEISKOPF: No, no, wherever it needed to go. You know, when you design a green, you look for an easy place to drain that water to, whether it's to a big catch basin that goes to a major drainage, you know, exit, or we used a lot of sump areas here, especially for the bunkers and occasionally a green where it went down into a sump.

Nope, there's a lot of misleading things when you play at these types of elevations and you have this drastic changes of ravines, you know, low parts, you think things are going that way. Doesn't always go that way as it appears to go.

Q. What impact do you think the weather, all the rain that we've had will have on the course?

TOM WEISKOPF: Well, it will make both courses play a lot longer, you're next to sea level. You're 350 feet above sea level basically. The air's heavier, but if it dries out, it depends whether they play lift, clean and place. That's a big issue. I don't make that decision. If they can lift, clean and place, makes it a lot easier. They're very good at what they do.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Well, Tom, we'd like to thank you for joining us this morning. We're all looking forward to seeing the changes. If you have any more questions for Mr. Weiskopf, we'll grab you outside. If you guys want to hang in your seat, we've got Jason Day coming up next.