

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
November 30, 2017



SERGIO GARCIA (-5)

MODERATOR: Sergio, lovely round today.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Can you talk us through it on how it went out there?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, it was a long round. Obviously a couple rain delays on the course and not what you hope for, but other than that I felt like I played pretty solid. I wouldn't say that it was amazing but it was good. The most positive thing for me would be to go a bogey-free round, which I didn't realize until we got done. But yeah, it was a nice round. I feel like mentally I'm not quite as sharp as I was probably a month ago or so. I guess the year is kind of draining a little bit, but it was nice to play with Scotty and with Wade, we had a great time. Other than a couple of times where it poured down on us, it was a fun day.

Q. Sergio, are you able to give us a feel as to the conditions of the course? We know you had two rain delays, but how playable was it other than that?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, the greens, other than when it started pouring and obviously they were filled with water, the greens held up great. The water -- as soon as it stopped raining, they drained very, very nicely. The fairways did quite well but they were a little bit wetter. We did have two or three mud balls here and there obviously after the big rains. But other than that, the bunkers were nice. The bunkers, you didn't see any potholes in the bunkers so that was nice to see. You know, so the course did as well as you can expect under the conditions.

Q. What were the two up-and-downs from the bunkers early in the round, and do you think tomorrow, now that you've had a second look at the golf course, putting will be a little bit easier?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, I think as you go along and you play more rounds, you probably get a little more familiarized with the course so there's no doubt that obviously you know a little bit more the things you want to do. Still a matter of being able to do them and being committed to what you want to do.

The couple up-and-downs early on were nice because they keep your round going. You know, you don't -- feels like you make a couple bogeys there and then it drags a little bit, but fortunately we were able to do that. The putt on 17 obviously was big after that rain delay. So I felt like I made some nice putts. The greens are tricky. You know, the grain, it's a little

bit all over the place, so sometimes it's difficult to gauge how much it's going to affect it, but they're rolling nicely.

Q. Sergio, you hit a terrific shot out of the trees for one of your birdies on the par 5, can you talk us through that, and also your mentality in difficult conditions to still really have a go at making birdie from a tough position?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, well, unfortunately it wasn't my best drive. I pulled it left and, I mean, I got not a great lie. Tried to hit like a hooking 5-iron. I hit a great shot, but unfortunately it just didn't hook enough and went under some trees on the right.

The good thing is that I was -- I had 190 yards a little bit into the wind, so I had to hit probably -- had a big tree. I couldn't hit straight, there was a branch. If the branch would have not been there, I probably could have hit a straight shot over the tree in front, but because of that I had to hit like a big slice around the big tree in front of me.

Funny enough, at Valderrama on the seventh hole I think it was in the first or second round I had a similar shot like that and I hit 4-iron and a similar yardage, around 190 yards, and I came up a little bit short. So I thought, okay, it's just kind of like the same shot, a little bit clearer. I've got one more club, got the 3-iron, and obviously I was hoping to hit on the green or somewhere on the green so I could make par. The birdie obviously was a big bonus, but I'll take it.

Q. Sergio, how often do you go to a new course that you've never seen before and say, okay, I didn't play my best but I shot 67, how often do you do that?

SERGIO GARCIA: Fortunately, it's happened several times, but at the same time it's never easy. I think the best thing about it was how what I've been working on, really been very patient even in the tough moments I stepped in there and realizing that some of those moments are going to happen and you've just got to deal with that the best way possible. So because of that I was able to scramble around nicely and solid scramble nice pars here and there, and because of that I shot a really nice round.

Q. Sergio, just wondering from that question, when you do have a situation that you've never seen a course really and you can produce a round like that, how well does that position you for the rest of the tournament? And then just secondly, how successful were your yardages today and will that change dramatically throughout the week?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, obviously it's great. Hopefully I'm able to do more of the same but every day's different. Every day's a different story, and it also depends on the weather. If it gets windy it can be quite tricky, this course. So I'm obviously extremely proud of the way I scored being the second time I played the course, but I thought we were -- we did quite well with our clubs out there. Like I said, it wasn't easy because when it was raining, the ball wasn't going too far and it was heavy. Then the wind would pick up and you had to realize

or had to make sure that you were doing the right things. Every time you have to guess the right amount of hurt and things like that, so I think that we did quite well with that.

There were some tough shots out there, like the second hole was playing extremely tough into the wind, the par 3. Hit a really good 5-iron to the middle of the green there. So all of those things were very positive and hopefully I can feel a little bit smoother out there with my swing and keep the momentum going.

Q. Sergio, 6:10 a.m., when was the last time you teed off in a tournament that early?

SERGIO GARCIA: Never, I can tell you that.

Q. (Inaudible) and what did you make of the crowd?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I've never teed off at 6:10 in a tournament. Obviously in practice rounds I've done it before, but in a tournament I think probably the earliest I've teed off I want to say it's 6:50, maybe 7:00. So that was interesting. I think it was probably -- I want to say it was the closest I've had a dinner and a breakfast ever. Yeah, I woke up at 4:00 this morning, had a bit of breakfast. Actually, had a shower, got dressed, had a nice breakfast, tried to make sure I didn't wake up my wife, and then I got to the putting green probably just after 5:00, probably like 10 past 5:00. Had a nice warmup and got to the 10th and I was impressed how many people were there at 6:10 in the morning. I was expecting -- I was kind of expecting people to kind of come as it did, as they did, they come around. But I didn't think -- I thought there were going to be like 10 or 12 people at the first on the 10th tee and there were probably I would say at least 200 or 300 people there already at 6:10, so that was really, really nice to see.

Q. Sergio, just wondering what you made of Adam Scott coming back to the broomstick after using the short putter.

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, obviously I hadn't Scotty yet and I didn't see him yesterday so I didn't know that he went back, so on the putting green we were joking a little bit about it. Yeah, I mean, I think that at the end of the day, obviously we talked about it and he's very cautious to make sure that he's holding it the way you should hold it, make sure he doesn't anchor it at any time.

And I looked at him throughout the whole day and he looked -- you know, you could see that he was making sure that he had it away from his chest, which is nice to see. But we know Scotty, we know Scotty's a great gentleman, he's a great boy and he's never going to do anything that shouldn't be done.

But I thought he rolled it quite well to be totally honest. He probably could have holed probably two or three more putts that looked like they might go in and just kind of lipped out or burned the edge. But at the end of the day the most important thing is how he feels. It seemed like he felt fairly good, so I'm sure that -- he's done well with that kind of putter, so

I'm sure that that brings him a little bit of confidence.

Q. Sergio, about the time of the Masters a lot was made of your greater or increasing capacity to put the rollercoaster of golf behind you to overcome adversity in a better way. You kind of touched on it just a little while ago. Is it something you're still working on or is it becoming more natural now for you to do that?

SERGIO GARCIA: No, you still have to work on it because it's easy to get frustrated and kind of lose it a little bit, and now towards the end of the season it's even easier because mentally you're not as fresh, you're not as strong and it's easy to do that.

So like I said, that's one of my goals every single year. I'm not so worried about, you know, trying to win two or three, four, one, eight times a year. I'm more worried about trying to keep improving on the aspects of the game that I know that I can improve and that I've shown myself that I can be much better at. I think that is important and I'm going to have to be able to keep it the same way because it's going to be a tough three days out here. This course is demanding and you have to stay very patient out there.

Q. Sergio, I'll take you back to the question about Adam Scott and the broomstick. We saw Bernhard Langer and also Scott McCarron on the seniors tour using it. Adam pointed out it wasn't a ban on a long stick, it was a ban on anchoring. Do you think we might see some more of the PGA TOUR and European Tour players actually pull it out and start to use it again?

SERGIO GARCIA: I don't know. I mean, you don't have as many players -- I don't think there were as many players using it. There were probably a couple handfuls. But it's not easy. I mean, it's not easy to use it without anchoring. Some guys might have the nerve and the touch to do it like Bernhard's doing or Scotty or McCarron, but it's not easy to do it. It's a real long club. I've tried it a couple times and it's not easy to keep it smooth. It's just a matter of trying to use it the best way possible and obviously making sure that you don't break the rules. If you don't do that, then it's all good.

MODERATOR: Excellent, Sergio. Thank you so much for joining us today. We hope to see you again tomorrow.

SERGIO GARCIA: Thank you.