

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**August 22, 2018**



**DARREN CLARKE**

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**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Please welcome three-time PGA TOUR winner, Darren Clarke. Welcome to your PGA TOUR Champions debut.

**DARREN CLARKE:** Thank you.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** How do you feel being out here?

**DARREN CLARKE:** Yeah, good being a rookie again when you're 50 years old. But no, I'm excited. All the guys that I played with on the PGA TOUR and to see all those guys again, they've all been very welcoming to me. I'm very excited to start another -- hopefully start another chapter in my career again.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** So you've played The Open Championship every year, but you haven't actively played since 2016.

**DARREN CLARKE:** No.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** What have you been doing?

**DARREN CLARKE:** Basically playing a little bit here and there. Ryder Cup, the captaincy took a lot of time, a lot of effort for a few years. And then since then, basically hanging out down at the Abaco Club down in the Bahamas. I'm hanging out down there, practicing and playing, doing a little bit of fishing, eating too much, drinking too much. Doing as you do in the Bahamas, having a good time.

But I've been down there again with the family the past three weeks and spent a lot of time on the range working really hard, and I'm trying to get ready because, you know, as I've been getting closer to 50, I've been paying more and more attention to the Champions Tour. The scores that the guys are shooting are unbelievable. I'm under no illusions at all how good these guys are. They're shooting 20 under par for three rounds of golf and that's just incredible. But you come out here on the range, you watch and you can see why. These guys are really, really good.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Speaking of guys that are so good, you'll be playing with Seattle native Fred Couples and Chris DiMarco as he makes his debut tomorrow. What are your thoughts on that pairing?

**DARREN CLARKE:** Yeah, that's going to be a little bit of fun. I know both the guys really, really well. Used to play a lot of golf with Freddie back in the day on the PGA TOUR.

Practice rounds, it was Freddie and Davis Love against David Duval and myself on frequent occasions. And then Chris, played a lot of golf with Chris as well, against him in Ryder Cups and stuff like that. It will be good. I'll be a little bit nervous getting ready to go again and start again, but really looking forward to it.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Do you have any expectations for yourself this weekend?

**DARREN CLARKE:** No. I think I've got to find my feet. Whether you're a rookie on the main tours or the Web.com Tour or European Tour, Challenge Tour, whatever, I think you've got to find your feet a little bit. That's what I have to do. I've got to come out and figure out where my game's at. I'm not really sure because I haven't been that competitive for that long. So figure that out maybe the next couple of weeks and see what I really need to work hard on, work on those areas and then try and improve from there. So I'm not putting any expectation on myself. I just hope that I play reasonably well and see how it goes.

**Q. You could have played last week because you turned 50 a couple weeks ago.**

**DARREN CLARKE:** I did.

**Q. Why the Boeing Classic for your first one?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** Because I know I was eligible for Dick's Sporting Goods up in Endicott, but I haven't played BC Open there before so I didn't really know the golf course. When I had my choice of being on the golf course for my 50th birthday or being on the beach in the Bahamas for my 50th birthday, the beach sort of won that battle.

**Q. What is it going to take to get competitive sharp between practicing and trying to dial in, but also competition?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** You've just got to play, you've got to be in competition. You can't just, you know, expect to go out there and stand flush and hit every shot. It's much easier in practice than when you've actually got a card in you hand and the shot really matters.

So it's just getting back into it and play some tournaments and getting back into tournament mode. There's a big difference between that and just playing regular casual sort of golf. That will take me a little bit of time to get back used to it again, but I'm looking forward to the challenge.

**Q. I remember in a Abaco we were joking there's no other profession where you're begging to get older faster.**

**DARREN CLARKE:** Yeah. It was one of those the past few years I've been looking forward to starting on the Champions Tour. You know, to arrive here and go and see the golf course and see how good it is here this week and everything about it, you know, it's truly -- it's better than my expectations were. It's going to be a lot of fun.

**Q. So you have no expectations, but would you be surprised if you were in contention the final day? Could you do that?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** I don't know, I really don't know. You know, I've been working really hard down there in Abaco. I've been putting the hours in working on a few things that I need to fix, so we will see. The guys, with the way that the scoring has been, you know, what was the winning score here last year, was it 15, 16?

**Q. Something like that.**

**DARREN CLARKE:** Something like that. That's -- I mean, that's good golf around this golf course. So I would like to be up and around there, but I shall see where we are on Sunday.

**Q. How did winning the British Open change your life and change how people viewed you?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** It didn't change my life because I behaved the same beforehand as I did after, so it didn't really change anything at all. It was more for myself. I always felt as if I could become a major champion. As my career was progressing, I've been through some difficult times in my career which took away my ability to really compete at the high end for quite some time.

But did I ever doubt that I would have the opportunity to win a major then? No, I didn't. I was just hopeful that the situation would arise. You know, I guess it was my time. If there was ever one that I was going to win, it was going to be The Open Championship, playing on links and the format of golf that I grew up playing most of my golf on. So, you know, to win The Open Championship, I feel very fortunate and very privileged.

**Q. You are one of the most popular winners in history, they say.**

**DARREN CLARKE:** Well, sort of maybe not the healthiest, nor smartest or fittest guy, whatever, so maybe it resonated a little bit with the crowd than some of the other ones. But the crowds, they've always been very good to me. Even my time playing the PGA TOUR over here and stuff, the crowds were always very kind to me all over the world wherever I've gone, so I hope that continues.