

FRED COUPLES

Q. Fred, past champion here but we're at a new location. Can you talk about the move to Firestone and your excitement to come back to this course?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. I hope I'm not saying anything wrong. I'm still trying to figure out why we're here and the regular Tour isn't, but we're very lucky to be here.

I never won here. I came close maybe once or twice. But I've always liked the course and I hear it's in perfect shape. So it's really -- we don't play -- however you want to word it, I played golf my whole life, we don't play many events like this on the Champions Tour. What I mean is, with this much prestige. Like you can walk in the locker room and you've got Tiger Woods has won this I don't know how many times. Jack Nicklaus. I mean, we play some of our Champions Tour events and Jack's name's in there with Arnold Palmer for Champions Tour, but not an event like this. So very nice to be here. I like the hot and humid and I like the course.

Q. How's your health? Are you feeling good this week? I see you practicing a little.

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. Well, I was just telling someone who cares that the last shot I hit was okay and I parred the 36th hole at Augusta, so that's the last time I played, in April. So I just got away from it, and the more I got away from it, the more I enjoyed getting away from it. So we had a chit chat about a month ago and that's really the only time I talked about golf.

And then two weeks ago I went to Hawaii on a vacation and played golf every day. I come in here with another week off. But I feel okay. I don't think I'm going to win, but I'm certainly going to play and then keep playing a little more this summer.

Q. Tiger's won it eight times.

FRED COUPLES: There you go, eight times.

Q. Do you ever text him for like --

FRED COUPLES: I text him all the time. Yeah, his advice would be make more putts. We have a great relationship. And my advice to him is keep playing like you are, you're going to win something someday.

Again, I haven't seen it, but when I used to play here the advice is you need to really be able to hack it out of the rough when you get in there. And the greens are usually perfect and

you don't have to shoot really low scores, and they can. I remember one time playing when Jose shot 61 and I'm like, "61? I don't know if I'm going to make nine birdies for the week and he's making them in 18 holes."

But it is that kind of course where if you get going bad, you can really struggle, and if you get going well, you know, any course is easy when you hit every fairway and every green. Tiger has won because he's won several places eight times, but this happens to be one of them. That's why I'm glad to be here. I haven't been here in a long time. I don't know when the last year was that I competed in the World Series, but like I said, this is huge for our tour to be here.

Q. Do you have any family members coming for the thing tomorrow, or any friends?

FRED COUPLES: I have a couple people that's shocking they said they're coming, so they must want to see this two-minute speech badly. As when we were talking, you know, I'm not going to keep asking, but I'm trying to figure out how I got this award. Maybe Jim Nance got it last year and said, you know, "Throw a bone to my roommate."

You know, I do love the game of golf, I always have, and I try and represent it in a way unlike some and it's mostly by golf. I mean, I'm not going around curing cancer and doing a lot of things. I've done stuff in Seattle.

But for me, playing in Japan and playing in Sweden and playing on the European Tour, going to Germany all those years to play, I really enjoyed that and I still enjoy playing. I just physically can't do the grind anymore, so I kind of get away from it.

Q. I have to ask you what you thought about Kawhi Leonard.

FRED COUPLES: You know what, yeah, all it took was a phone call and then all of a sudden their team is set. I would love to have Paul George, but Paul George is signed with Oklahoma and now their team's blowing up. It's very weird.

You know, we're all individual sports here, so when you get a team, I would like to call on Tiger right now and say, "Hey, can you tee off for me on Thursday and at least play the first 36?" I live in L.A., I know Steve Ballmer a little bit and I'll be going to a few game to watch these guys play, so it will be fun. The whole L.A. Lakers, L.A. Clipper thing is really going to be some few years here.

Q. I would think if they play on Christmas Day you probably wouldn't go, but --

FRED COUPLES: I'll watch it on TV with the other six every two hours, so that will be a stay at home. But it's very exciting, it really is. It's very weird, you talk about the Lakers and Toronto and all of a sudden you wake up one day and it says the Clippers. I had to click it back to look at it again.