

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
August 18, 2019



DOUG BARRON (-17)

Q. You've been here 15 days, right?

DOUG BARRON: I've been here -- I flew in a week ago Wednesday to pre-qualify after finishing fifth in the British Senior Open.

Q. So you should like buy a house out here then.

DOUG BARRON: Absolutely. I'm thinking of buying one in Owego, beautiful community. I played eight times in the B.C. Open. Dick's Sporting Goods obviously does the Champions Tour.

I couldn't be more thrilled to be in y'all's town. Y'all's community is amazing. Y'all get so behind our tournament, I love the crowds. Y'all inspired me today. And when I went back out there, I never felt like everyone wasn't pulling for me, it was so cool. I'm so happy right now, I couldn't be more happy.

Q. You out-dueled Fred Couples.

DOUG BARRON: Well, I'm glad he shot 9 under today and not on Friday. Fred Couples is a Hall of Famer, one of the all-time greatest golfers ever.

I had my day. I've been very fortunate this year. Even the tournaments, the smaller tournaments I've played, I led three of them from start to finish and so I carried that experience today and just said, you know, I'm playing against younger kids in these other tournaments, I can't beat them with my mental game, I've just got to go out and hit the ball now.

Man, today was amazing. I just got -- I made two crazy birdies on the front nine. One on No. 2, I drove it right a little and made a 50-footer on the second hole. I'll never forget it as long as I live. And then on No. 6 I hit it barely in the rough and had to kind of run it up the green. I hit it perfect and I hadn't made a 15-footer. I turned a could-be bogey into a birdie and that's like stealing. Then just played really solid after that. It was fun. I had so much fun here and the community's so amazing.

Q. How long was that putt on 4? I thought that was a pretty big one, too.

DOUG BARRON: Yeah, so that may have been one of my best shots of the day was the tee ball actually. I hit a 5-iron into that wind 197. I told my caddie, I flighted it about 20 feet lower and I landed it almost pin high and it trickled over the green. The ball was sitting really

high and I kind of went under it. If I had to do it over again, I would have chipped with my 56-degree, but I didn't. I made that putt.

All I could think about was in the qualifier at Hiawatha, I made the same putt on about the same hole -- well, it was about the 13th hole, but it was at least know I was going to make it. That's all I could think about.

But I kept telling myself on this journey since I turned 50, it's my destiny, it's my destiny, it's my destiny and God's got me. That's kind of, I wouldn't say it's a mantra, but He did. It's not me doing it, God gave me the ability to get it done today. It was awesome, so it was cool.

Q. The fist pump after the birdie on 17 and the fist pump walking up the fairway here on 18, what were those emotions like at those two moments?

DOUG BARRON: Well, at 17, I'm just going to tell you, I knew I had it because I've been driving the ball so good. I didn't exactly putt great this week, but I guess it said I putted great on the stats. I mean, when I made that putt, I said the only club I can hit off 18's driver because I haven't really hit it out of play too far.

And then I've only hit that low left shot twice in about a month and I picked a heck of a time to do it. Once it was in play, I knew it was over. But gosh dog, that was -- I can't see. So about 200 yards out, I can't see the ball, my caddie can't see the ball because the lighting was terrible. I usually know I hit it in play because of my feel, but it didn't feel so good. Oh, well.

Q. It's funny to hear you say you didn't putt well because we saw you make about a 70-footer yesterday --

DOUG BARRON: I mean, y'all needed some highlights. You needed a little highlight. I saw it got a few looks on social media. But no, I putted good for the week. I'm just saying if I roll all my 15-footers, it could have been a really fun week. God just wanted me to have a little stress in my life on the back nine, so it was cool.

I had fun. I enjoyed every minute of it. Honestly, when you're competing and you can bring out your best at the end, that's cool stuff. That was fun for me. That birdie at 17 was just money to me.

Q. What kept you going those years you weren't out on the Tour?

DOUG BARRON: Well, I never really thought of playing again. When I fired myself in, I can't remember the year, you'll have to look it up. What is it, 2019? Probably 2012 I fired myself from golf. I always say that because somebody's got to fire you from golf. I never really aspired to play again.

I taught for five years and I got in another business and I just had some good fortune and my

golf game kind of came back. And I just decided, "Hey, honey" -- my wife, Leslie -- I said, "Do you think it's okay if I go try this again?" I found nine guys plus myself to give me some money to go play. For the last year and a half I've been doing pretty good. I've won four tournaments not counting this one. Now five, thank you. I mean, it's a life changer. I mean, I love this community and I'll never forget this moment as long as I live. It was cool.

Q. How were the nerves today?

DOUG BARRON: Nerves were pretty good. I would say I got really nervous, but I knew my swing was good, so I kept hitting greens. That was what was the cool part. So when you keep hitting greens when the nerves are bad, you're in good shape.

Even the greens -- I'll tell you the point where I knew it was mine, and even before the rain delay. I drove it in the bunker at hole 13 and I had 195 into the breeze and it was -- we knew the storms were coming in and I hit the best 5-iron out of that bunker in my whole life and I had about a 15-footer. I left it short, but I knew. I said, "I got it, I got it today." I had my best stuff today, so I knew. I don't know how many greens I hit in regulation, but I knew it wasn't going away.

The delay wasn't great. I hung out with Freddie and Jay Haas and Woody Austin and Billy Andrade and the guys in there. It was like six of us in there the whole time watching. Couldn't be happier. I was like, I mean, Freddie's one of my heroes. I mean, like I said. So I'm glad it's over, I'm not going to lie to you. I'm worn out.

Q. Coming up the 18th hole you had a two-shot lead. How did it feel walking up to the green with everyone cheering you on?

DOUG BARRON: Well, the biggest emotion was, one, I missed taking my son to college yesterday. That was -- I needed to justify that. That's a tough deal. Hope you don't have to go through that. Sorry, guys.

And two, just all the people that believed in me over the last couple years. A lot of emotions ran through me. My 12-year-old's never really seen me play. I haven't been playing a lot since he's been born or he was old enough to know. And then my wife, you know. Been married 23 years and her believing in me and saying, "Doug, we only live once, let's go do this." That's huge. I had a whirlwind of a week.

Q. Your feeling of destiny, could you ever even possibly envision not even a whole month into your 50th birthday this would happen?

DOUG BARRON: No. I went over and Monday qualified with 144 people at five different locations at the British Open and I think there were 14 spots at my course and I really thought I could do that. And then to go finish fifth at Royal Lytham, which is one of the toughest courses I've ever seen. I floundered a little down the stretch, I just hadn't been in that arena much. It helped me a ton here, but I played really good. I had a week of my life.

And then Memphis, the World Golf Championship in Memphis going on and one of our local writers goes, the biggest story in Memphis is maybe not in Memphis, and it was a cool story. Then it took off nationally. I don't know who all read it, but it was pretty cool.

Then all of a sudden this happened. So no, you can't imagine this. I thought if I had -- all I asked is my wish today, knowing I had a two-shot lead, I didn't really -- the thing is, when you're leading and you know you've got to go shoot a low score, I didn't really concern myself leading, I had to play aggressive. So I just said, "If you just give me three holes to go, I will take this thing," and then I had to wait two hours to do it.

It was just an emotional day. That waiting is no fun. I got up at 4:30 this morning to finish my second round, then I went and took a 30-minute nap and checked out of my hotel, and I've got to drive to Syracuse tonight to fly home. It's been a long day. I'm excited, that's all I've got. I love you guys.

Q. Where does your son go to school?

DOUG BARRON: He is going to Mississippi State. That's where I graduated. I went to LSU one year and transferred, and he's going to Mississippi State.

Q. What's his name?

DOUG BARRON: John William "Buzz" Barron. We call him Buzz. Buzz was my wife's grandfather's name.