

FRED COUPLES

Q. Best round in five years. What got into you?

FRED COUPLES: I don't know. I went there to get ready for here and the last time, I think -- I'm not really sure, I've not looked -- the last time I was there, I won. That could be wrong, I'm not really sure.

But it's a lot like Seattle and I like the course and I shot typical 70. Then I got a little better the second day, and then all hell broke loose and I hit a lot of really good irons. I drove it okay, which it's really tree lined, but I hit a lot of good irons and made a few putts and almost had a shot.

Q. Does it surprise you?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, you know, because I think as I kept birdieing holes -- I hit a couple in the water on 14, but then I chipped in for par. I hit a bad 3-wood off the 15th tee, which is a scary tee shot. I thought, you know, here you go, you can't even hit a shot under pressure. But then I played good the last three holes.

It was surprising because I want to play well and I don't practice hard enough. Every now and then I have a good round, but I had three in a row.

Q. So does that give you a lot of confidence coming into this week?

FRED COUPLES: It doesn't hurt, you know. I do like this course, I say it every year, and I always get off to a slow start and then get better. So hopefully, you know, I'm not saying I'm going to come out and shoot 68 tomorrow, but I need to if I'm going to win this thing. You can't keep shooting 71s or 72s.

So yeah, it will be two weeks in a row. I don't do that very often. Yesterday I played with some family members. It was brutal out here yesterday and I'm like, 70 degrees every day until we get here? But I guess tomorrow's supposed to be better.

Q. So did you feel you needed to play last week to get ready for this week?

FRED COUPLES: Well, I played -- every month I play a tournament. I had three months off, then I played in our PLAYERS Championship, then I had a couple weeks off. Then I went to the British, then I think I had three weeks off. So I just told myself it's not like I -- I told Cheney I don't want to go and -- he says, you don't embarrass yourself. Well, I'm never going to win if I take all this time off and just show up. So I went there and I practiced a few

days before I went to New York and I was hitting the ball pretty well. So, you know, I should hit the ball well, I really should. Kind of depends on how I play the what?

Q. The par 5s.

FRED COUPLES: There you go. Yesterday, you know, I birdied -- I had one birdie yesterday and I birdied the last hole, so I birdied my last par 5.

Q. I'm sure it's occurred to you, but it's your last chance here in your 50s. What does that mean?

FRED COUPLES: Well, it means if I don't, then I'll be 60 when I get here next year and I won't feel any different.

Q. Do you think you're running out of chances, though?

FRED COUPLES: You know, that depends on -- so my golf teacher, Paul, just took the job at the course where I play in Palm Springs. I have a funny feeling that's going to be a pretty good deal for me. So I'll practice more, I'll see him a lot, and next year I think will be a nice year no matter how much I play. Even if I play 10 times, but I'll see him more.

Q. And what's his last name?

FRED COUPLES: Paul Marchand. So I went to school and he's been my teacher for however long, so that's a big deal. Am I going to go bang balls for two hours? No. But if I just see him and he watches me, that's how we usually do it. He says one little thing and it clicks and I work on that. I hit 30 or 40 balls, so that's a big deal for me.

Q. Health wise, how's it been?

FRED COUPLES: When I don't play, I feel incredible. Last week I played and I just get real twitchy and I don't sleep, and I don't want to take anything. Then this week I took a few days off, stayed with John Bracken and slept pretty well.

But that's part of the problem is I don't sleep when my -- my body just doesn't calm down. But when I don't play, knock on wood, I feel really good. So when I do finally retire, I think I'll do all right, my back won't be a big hindrance.

Q. What about the weather? How important is it for it not to be cold like this?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, you know, I've got a sweater on. I do have shorts on because anytime they're going to let us wear shorts, I'm wearing them.

It's okay, it's okay. Yesterday was brutal because it was raining and damp. I don't really want to play in that Friday or Saturday or Sunday. I don't think we're gonna. The hot

weather's nice, but the cool weather, I'm not any stiffer. I've said my whole life when I go play the British Open, I'm stiff all the time and the other guys feel good. Now they're playing in 40-degree weather, they're stiff.

I just don't get the pop. That's one thing I've noticed, that when the weather's not great, I don't drive it where I want to drive it. And if it's hot and warm and I get loose, I can hit it 275 or 280, but when it's cold, I hit it 250. Mentally. It doesn't matter who I'm playing with because they're not bombing in it, either, but mentally it bothers me.

So if I play the third hole over there, the best hole on the course, and I hit a good drive when it's warm and I have an 8-iron, I feel pretty good about it. Yesterday I think I had like 190 and I'm like, jeez, I hit a pretty good drive, but it's raining and damp. But mentally I want to play the course the same and I think I need to get over that because as I get older, I'm not going to be hitting drives and long irons or rescues to these par 5s, so I've got to figure it out.