

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 12, 2019



FRED COUPLES

Q. Warm reunion there with Tom Izzo?

FRED COUPLES: I never met him. I've been to a few of his games, but never met him. It makes my day, you know, when you see people that you watch on TV all the time with not just good programs, but I mean, good people and good coaches and you hear a lot about, so it was fun.

Good to be back here at the Ally. I love this course. Always played it in the old days. My caddie came in yesterday and said it's in phenomenal shape. I guess we got a ton of rain. I'm excited to be here and just be a part of the tournament.

Q. Been real hot lately, a couple of top finishes. What's going right for your game?

FRED COUPLES: Well, I'll tell you, the last time I played I shot 76, and to be honest with you, I still think about I don't know what happened. I didn't really play poorly, I just kept making bogeys. And then when Brandt Jobe was 7 under, 8 under, 9 under, I knew I was done. I just couldn't make any birdies just to finish up there.

But I have been playing well. I've been working on my game a little more, which as anyone out here will tell you, if you don't practice and play, you're not going to beat these guys. I got going in New York and then in Seattle. So, like I say, I plan on playing well and I hope to.

Q. Very competitive field as always, but is there something you have your eye on personally that will kind of put you over that edge here at the Ally Challenge?

FRED COUPLES: I mean, for me, the big deal is that I have a lot of course knowledge and so do a lot of these guys. If you look around, I think half of them have probably played 10 times in this tournament or more.

But I think really the big challenge is how you're doing yourself. I can't stop Scott McCarron from shooting 65 tomorrow, and if he shoots 65, I better shoot 67 or 68 because anything worse than that you're in big trouble after one round. It's pretty quick events with 54 holes.

But, you know, on the other hand, if you come out and play a hot round, you should be there on Sunday. If you have a good Sunday, you have a shot at winning. But the challenge really is just playing good every single round and having some hot streaks, which you can do here.

Q. Tom Izzo, Michigan State is Michigan State, but what made you a fan of his?

FRED COUPLES: People always ask, I grew up in Seattle, I do like UW, which is Washington. I went to school at Houston, which we had great basketball programs when I was in school, but there are very few schools I dislike unless I dislike the person that's bothering me, like some guys with Florida or Florida State who are very proud of their schools and I tease them a little.

But when Michigan State's playing basketball you know it's going to be a good game and you know he's going to make it exciting and he's a great coach.

So like I said, I never met him. I have been to a few of his games with Jim Nance, who we were talking about, and I have seen him. But just to run over and say hi real quick, not to bother him but say hi. He's got a good team he said next year, so he's looking forward to the season. That's basically it for me. I'm a sport nut and if I was playing anywhere else and went up to Urban Meyer, who's not coaching anymore, it would be fun to say hi to him, too.

Q. You talked about making those runs. Obviously you shot that 65 last year on Sunday. Obviously you could do it, too. What do you feel you've got to do to maybe get into that rhythm again this week?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, I didn't even know what I shot here last year, where I finished. There are some -- you have to play the par 5s pretty well. You have to do that on every course. But for me, the par 3s are not easy here. Most people say, yeah, if I can go through and make four 3s on the par 3s, you're picking up shots on the field.

I think at Warwick, if you can par them all and maybe throw in a birdie because you hit a great iron in there, you're going to do well. So par 5s are par 5s. If I play tomorrow and I play them even par, you know, I'm already behind the eight ball. If you can play them a couple under, then you're right with everyone else. They're not easy, they're pretty long and they'll be really long after the rain. But the greens are perfect, so I hear, and you're going to make some putts and you just have to be a good putter.

Q. And obviously 17, they moved the tee box up. What are your thoughts about that, maybe getting the crowd more into it?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, a lot of people don't know that way back when there were two or three tournaments that started all the fun stuff and it was right here in Grand Blanc or Flint where the 17th hole was, when I say rowdy, it was loud and rowdy but in a good way and they had a good time.

I have not seen it yet, but I've heard they spruced it up to make it a little more fun. I enjoy it. For me, I wish we were further back. I think I'm a good 5- and 6-iron player and I heard it's like 160 yards now, so the advantage maybe I hit an 8-iron and then birdie, I don't know. But it's a fun hole, it's great to be on holes like that. The people enjoy it, too.