

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
July 30, 2020



JIM FURYK

THE MODERATOR: Jim, welcome to PGA Tour Champions. And welcome to the Ally Challenge presented by McClaren. How does it feel to be back at Warwick Hills?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it feels good. Always a golf course that I really enjoyed playing. I think I look back, I played 15 US Opens here, place I had a lot of success. Won here in '03, and so it felt like -- I'm kind of happy that this is my first PGA Tour Champions event and good to start here at a place that I'm real familiar with and really enjoyed playing throughout my career.

THE MODERATOR: And what are your impressions? Just -- you have been out here a day or two seeing all the guys, old friends that you have played with many years.

JIM FURYK: I told my wife last night, like the first day of the Tour year every year, I always say it's like the first day of school. You're kind of excited, you get a little nervous, you haven't played in a while. Coming out here for the first time it was like the first day of high school but I just was homeschooled for the last five years. I haven't seen any of my old friends in a long time. And so it took me a while to even make it to the range or putting green yesterday, just saying hi to folks. So I enjoy it. I missed a lot of the guys.

It's interesting being the new kid on the block instead of getting teased about being the old guy on the PGA Tour.

So it's going to be a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to the transition in the next, however long it takes, maybe the next year, maybe the next two years, to being a full-time PGA Tour Champions player. But I plan on playing a lot more out here, even this year in the fall.

Q. Jim, obviously a crazy year, but it's great to have you guys all back. What did you do to keep busy when things started shutting down?

JIM FURYK: I'm the least handy person in the world. And so I tried to fix -- we were fixings up stuff around kind of a relatively new house that have been in for a couple of years. And I kind of got tired of that for a while. I did a lot of fishing, where I could kind of -- we live real close to the St. Johns River, so I did a lot of fishing for a while, for about six weeks. And then I kind of realized that it was going to be maybe six weeks we were going to start playing again, so I kind of knocked the dust off the clubs. And in Florida we were able to play. So I got out and started playing and practicing quite a bit. And I took my son to the golf course quite a bit. We played some golf. So just tried to stay busy.

We travel so much, I feel like when we have a week off or two weeks off, we always get home and we're playing catchup. There's stuff to fix around the house, something's broken, a delivery is coming. Been working the last few weeks and always trying to catch up. It was nice to kind of clear some stuff off my desk, kind of feel like I was organized for a while. Now I'm back to a complete mess again. But it was organized for a while.

And I actually really enjoyed the fishing. Got a lot better at it, got my equipment kind of updated. So for the most part, it was a good break.

I know we all missed golf. I think we are really fortunate, the fact that we are back to work, back competing, it's quite impressive. I think great sponsors like Ally, this event is particularly special. And it's the first event on either Tour that's had a pro-am. And especially at this level, at the PGA Tour Champions, it's an instrumental part of what makes the tournaments go around. So being able to do that, being able to prove that we can do that in the same manner is very important. And hopefully we'll generate some charitable dollars for this area as well. The Flint/Grand Blanc area has always supported the PGA Tour. I remember in '17 and how wild it used to be. I have heard the stories from the Tour Champions that nothing has changed. It's usually that way. So we'll miss the fans, we'll miss the folks being out here, but I think they are going to make a significant donation to charity this week and hopefully help the community.

Q. Jim, has there been any other time in your career where there was -- where you have taken as long a break away from golf?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I do it a lot -- for the last eight years or so I have taken a long time off in kind of the fall/winter. So once that FedExCup kind of ended and we got done with the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup, or whatever it may be, I kind of shut things down and didn't play much in the fall, didn't play much in January. And I always kind of come out at the AT&T in February at Pebble Beach and kind of start my year. So I have a three- or four-month break where I didn't play a lot of golf. And what that did is really, late in my career it allowed me to be home at a time when the kids weren't in a lot of activities and I got to spend a lot of quality time with them, allowed me to recharge, kind of refocus on golf at times and maybe some weaknesses I wanted to work on. And then when I came out in February I kind of hit the ground running. Like I was excited. I was maybe a little rusty, but mentally I was in a good frame of mind. And because of that, I think it allowed me to compete longer in my career and kind of stay competitive longer in my career. So it was right for me. So this break really wasn't anything tremendously different other than I was just kind of getting back into it after going back in February. I was only really out for about six or seven weeks and then it kind of got shut down again. So I definitely had a lot of rust to knock off and -- but I have been playing -- I have played five of the last seven weeks on the PGA Tour, so kind of back in the flow of things now. And kind of feel good about my game.

Q. You talk to any of the guys about, like, a little competition out here. I know you know all these guys, but -- you watch and see what kind of the scores are and stuff like that, but thoughts on sort of the level of competition out here?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I mean, the guys will always come back and say the courses are longer than everyone imagines. I don't think I really have to understand much about the competition. I mean, you start going down a list of guys that play out here, they were No. 1 players in the world in their day and they are all good players. And you look at the scores every week in three-day events and you see a lot of 18 under pars and 20 under pars winning golf tournaments, it's not by mistake. So it's a little bit of a sprint out here for three days rather than four. It's going to probably take me a little while to get used to a three-day event over a four-day event, having four days to prepare and three days to play rather than vice versa. But I think it's going to be a bit more of a sprint, but I think I will enjoy it as well.

Q. You said you feel comfortable out here, obviously you have played here a lot of times. How does the course compare now to the last time you were here?

JIM FURYK: It's very similar. So it was a little wet yesterday off the range than previous. I played the front nine only. Honestly, I hit the ball about the similar distance as I did the last time we were here in '09, I probably hit the ball the same exact distance I did then, because of equipment. I'm probably not creating the same speed physically, but the golf ball and the equipment goes farther. I'm flying the ball about the same distance. So honestly, I feel like I kind of hopped into the same old course. I know there's a couple change on the back nine from '09 that I will get a chance to see today. Honestly, hasn't changed much. I always liked it here. The greens were perfect. So --

Q. Welcome to the Champions Tour.

JIM FURYK: Champions Tour, that's what it does?

Q. Yeah.

JIM FURYK: Before the round starts?

Q. Before the round.

JIM FURYK: Tour sponsor.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else for Jim?

Q. Jim, you still play obviously on the Tour. There are big, young guys, stars on the Tour these days. I guess I just -- how would you compare the talent that's out there, the young talent on the PGA Tour to maybe where it was 20 years ago, or when you were first getting in?

JIM FURYK: I think every decade, so -- kind of said it my whole career. You can go back and throw Hogan, Palmer, Nicklaus, Watson, Norman, Seve, right down the list. They are going to compete in any era. It doesn't matter where you put them. They are the greatest players that lived in their time. What you see is a larger talent pool. You'll see more young players not only ready to compete or to come out and keep their cards, but to win, that are ready early, at a very young age. When I left college, it was rare that a guy got the Tour card, let alone a guy, say, like Phil Mickelson that came out and won, like he won in college. And then Justin Leonard, some pretty good success early. David Duval. But they were the cream of the crop. They are guys that come out and win just that quickly. There's just -- it seems like there's more of those guys now. And it's actually fun to watch. The game changes, the style of the game changes.

When I was young on Tour, I heard a lot of veteran players say the game's changed, now we're into metal woods, the ball doesn't spin as much, it doesn't curve as much, it's a power-dominated game. A lot of -- it hasn't changed. I mean, I'm saying the same things now that they were saying then. And I don't mean it in a bad way, it's just the best players adapt and they figure out how to compete at the -- at that level, but it is fun to watch a bunch of young players come out and bomb it 320 yards and play golf courses differently, I guess. And golf courses try to adapt, the way they are set up, to try to combat how far the ball is going, how much the driver is going farther, the ball is going farther.

And the athletes are getting bigger and stronger. Our training techniques -- when I came out on Tour, that fitness trailer wasn't as full with guys working out. And you didn't see guys as fit as you see now. I mean, there were some, but not as many. And so the athletes getting bigger, stronger, faster as well.

Q. When you come to the Circle of Champions, you see your name down there from your win, what specific memories of past tournaments come to your head?

JIM FURYK: Well, win was special -- I had a finish here, so it ended up being -- ended up being the Ryder Cup that was played because of 9-11, I think I finished second that year, and that kind of got me -- I was maybe eighth or ninth or tenth -- sorry, I was probably eleventh or twelfth in the points and it jumped me up to eighth, top-10 got in. And so it kind of guaranteed I would get a spot on the Ryder Cup team. I remember some -- and actually that year I was kind of playing to win the tournament, but someone was out ahead, it might have been Tiger, I can't remember who it was. Someone was pretty far out ahead. I was playing for second. And playing for that Ryder Cup team. And I knocked in a pretty good putt at 17 and the crowd behind started the "USA" chant on the way to 18. They knew I made the Ryder Cup team. And it was pretty cool. So a cool memory.

But just a lot of good finishes here. And I remember this place just being full of fans. I mean, it's a -- for a modern-day golf course, it's a small foot footprint for land and they

packed a ton of people in here. And it felt even more full because of the small footprint. So there's always a buzz here, a lot of electricity, and a lot of fan support from this area. And that's kind of what I remember about it. I remember a golf course that was maybe not overly long, but tight, had to put the ball in the fairway. And the greens, some of them had a lot of slope to them. I forgot how big some of the greens are. I was a little surprised by that yesterday. I had kind of forgotten. On the second green, and there's some large, large greens out here. So I forgot a little bit about that. But some good memories and was excited to get back.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you very much, Jim.