

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**November 19, 2020**



**RORY SABBATINI ( -5 )**

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**Q. Rory, I thought you did a really good job on a really windy day. Tell me about the start where you birdied your first four holes. Was there anything in the warmup that indicated you were going to come out like that?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Yeah, I didn't feel like I hit the ball particularly well on the range and I didn't feel like I was putting very good and all of a sudden it clicked on the golf course.

No, you know, this is a golf course, when you get opportunities, you've got to try to maximize them. Yet still, even with the conditions out there, if you try and maximize them, you've got to be careful you don't mess up what you're trying to maximize.

**Q. After those four birdies to open the round, you ripped off 10 straight pars. I thought that was really the key to the round, your patience, not trying to force something in there. Those one-putt pars really cobbled together a good day.**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Exactly. Sometimes, even though you get off to a hot start like that, you get that little period of your golf where it can get a little bit more difficult and a little bit more challenging. I gave myself some good testers out there today, but all in all I really committed to the putts, especially in windy conditions, so I was very pleased with that.

**Q. Rory, considering the conditions, what did that start feel like to you going 4 under through four holes?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** 4 under through four holes, I was kind of going, I don't know what's going on here but I'm enjoying it. No, that's a great way to get the round started, especially in the conditions we had out there. You know, it kind of makes the round a little bit easier where you get yourself into a bit of a mode of relaxing a bit more about it. You don't feel like you have the pressure into shots so you can be a bit more conservative out there and patient.

**Q. This is your seventh time playing here. I'm sure over the course of that career you've had the opportunity to play in winds like that. Did that come in handy at all today knowing how difficult that golf course can be in these conditions?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** For sure, definitely it was a huge advantage. I've played this course many times in wind like this. To be honest, I actually expected the greens to be a little bit slower today, maybe prepared for the wind, but they're still up to speed. It's a challenge out there.

**Q. You just said you didn't find anything on the range, but then something clicked when you got on the golf course. What clicked?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** You know, you hit one good shot and you throw a good second shot on top of it and make a putt, you know, you repeat that a couple times, all of a sudden it relaxes you and you start trusting what you're doing out there a little bit more. I've got a lot of new equipment in the bag and a new ball this week, so everything seems to be combining all together.

**Q. Rory, what would you say has been the biggest key to your success the last couple seasons?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Honestly, it's interesting. I played many years injured and then finally, obviously after I had my neck fixed, that alleviated a lot of my problems. But it is kind of weird. I'm getting to that latter stage of my career now so I'm getting older, and even mornings like this I realize there's parts of my body that are aching that I didn't know would ache. So it's getting to be a little bit more of a challenge, but I think all things considered, I'm finally learning how to maximize the stronger points of my game. I took too many years to figure that out. That and then spent many years working on improving my putting and I feel like I've become a much more consistent putter and that alleviates a lot of pressure in the game right there.

**Q. The neck stuff and back stuff, tricky for so many people, I know. What was it that finally worked for you?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** I had an artificial disc replacement done. Yeah, I finally got to a point that I had no option, I had to have surgery. (Unintelligible) Spine, they make the part that's in my neck now and they really -- it's been probably the biggest life changer of anything I've ever done. It really went from one extreme to the complete opposite, agony to just joy just in minutes. So that really has been hugely impactful. With me, with my golf, it's alleviated so many of the issues that I was having because my neck was (inaudible.)

**Q. It goes beyond pain, doesn't it? It's psychological also.**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Oh, for sure. The stress factor of not knowing when you're going to wake up and be able to compete because you didn't know if your neck would be tweaked or something like that. The stress level was probably the worst part about it.

**Q. I'm doing a story on how people's offseasons may look a little different this year because of all the schedule changes. Any different plans than normal for you? What's it going to look like for you?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Mine's going to be pretty much what it normally is, lay around the pool, have some cocktails and relax.

**Q. This is a guess, what's October 15, 2014?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** That's my (inaudible.)

**Q. You won here during the height of the Tiger Woods era. How much would it mean to you to win now in your 40s against some of these young guys?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Golf's changed a lot. It's amazing how many young kids are coming out and from the get-go they're just prepared to win. The talent level is absolutely unbelievable. I can only imagine what it would be like, I'm sure it would be something pretty amazing.

I know my wife's still kicking at me going, "C'mon, I just want to get to Augusta once." That's kind of her dream, on her bucket list. She's going to get to caddie for me in Mexico this year. I told her, "Well, you better show up and put up."

**Q. How big of a deal would it be for you to get back there?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** Oh, it would be huge. Obviously, as I said, I've got five and a half years until I'm going to be on the Senior Tour, so as I said, I'm in that dwindling stage of my career. To be out here and still be able to compete is something I'm very happy about.

**Q. Once in a while you speak with a hint of what sounds like an American southern accent. Is that a complete accent or have other people told you that before?**

**RORY SABBATINI:** I think it's from living in Texas for 13 years.