

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**January 28, 2021**



**GARY WOODLAND ( -6)**

**Q. What was sort of the low point as far as the pain and the inability to swing the golf club?**

**GARY WOODLAND:** The low point was Thursday of the U.S. Open. I mean, I was in as much pain -- I broke down, coaches wanted me to pull out. I ended up playing. It's hard for me to pull out, it's not in me. You played in pain your whole life through all sports. It's a little different out here, though. The best players in the world are out here day in, day out, and on top of that you're throwing Winged Foot in. But as defending champ, it meant a lot to me to be there, it meant a lot to me to play, so I tried to give it all I had. I went and saw the doctor that weekend and they wanted to do surgery, so that was the low part for me.

I just opted not to do that and try to take a different route and we're here now, so that's a good thing, but I have a long way to go. I'm not 100 percent, but I'm not in pain and from that we can continue to build.

**Q. How do you hold yourself back and not try and do too much too soon?**

**GARY WOODLAND:** Yeah, that's been the big deal. Like I say, I've got to hone in those expectations a little bit. I'm getting to the point where my speed's getting back to I can start to do some things I was able to do in the past, but I went most of the year last year -- at the end of the year I wasn't practicing at all. I was getting injections after injections, I'm taking weeks off at a time and I'm showing up trying to compete. It just -- looking back it would have been nice just to have surgery and get it all done, but that's hindsight.

So for me right now, it's managing expectations. Last week was a big week for me to be pain free, and to come here this week I can start to ramp that up a little bit knowing the game's in a good spot.

**Q. Did you curse the golf gods because you were at the mountain top, you had just won the U.S. Open?**

**GARY WOODLAND:** I don't know. It all locked up. I was jumping on the bed with my son, so there's not too much I can do with the golf gods with that; that's more of me getting a little bit older and probably doing some things I shouldn't be doing.

**All in all, like I said, my body's trending in the right direction. The future's the big deal. As long as I continue to stay healthy, I think I can avoid surgery and I think I can have a long career out here.**

**Q. I'm sure you've noticed the way the game has changed in the last few years. You've got the tools to do it. How hard is it not to swing --**

**GARY WOODLAND:** That was tough, too. I mean, the game is definitely changing from when I was out here before, especially on the North Course. You're kind of hitting irons, you're getting the golf ball in play. That's not what's going on lately. Guys are hitting -- Bryson, obviously what he's doing, a lot of guys are going to longer drivers, they're hitting it a mile. My speed was going the other way last year, I was down significant. I think I was hitting 123, 124 clubhead speed last week, which is back where I'd like to be.

So I'm getting that back, but it was hard last year. I was in pain and I was hitting it all over the map and not hitting it very far, and that adds up to a lot of missed cuts and not a very good start.

**Q. At what point were you able to work with Justin over the last couple weeks when you finally felt you got your speed back and you guys could actually do some maintenance on your swing?**

**GARY WOODLAND:** The first time was right after the new year. He came down to see me, I think it was January 7th I think was the first time that we really spent full time together.

I'm still working with Pete Cowen, but strictly on short game now. So that was the first time JP and I really sat down and started working. We cranked up the speed that day. It was the first time I swung hard that day and I was sore the next day, so that was a little nerve wracking. At that point I wasn't walking, either. Like I said, last week was the first time I walked 18 holes. I walked with the girls in the morning and would come back and was locked up. It was a big test last week, but JP and I started really January 7th.

**Q. Did you have to fix anything that maybe -- any bad habits because of the pain?**

**GARY WOODLAND:** I had a ton of bad habits. That was more frustrating than anything. Even when I was feeling okay at the end of the year, I'd show up in the morning, I really had no chance, I was hitting it all over the map. You start swinging around pain and you get into some bad habits, so that was frustrating. I'd like to erase 2020, but I think a lot of people would like to erase 2020 from what's going on. Hopefully we can continue to stay where we're at and continue to build on it.