

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**June 30, 2021**

**JOEY SINDELAR**



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**Q. We'll start off with obviously the big news of the day, the three-year extension. Just your comments on it?**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Sure, yeah. So you're going to need the editing room for this one because there's a lot of stuff to say, and I don't know which way around to start.

I suppose I'll start with Dick's Corporation, you know, was -- ever since they stepped in, they just -- the loyalty here has been incredible for obvious reasons. The reasons are obvious but that doesn't mean it had to happen. It's pretty amazing that they've continued to just do everything necessary. And by that I mean they just haven't been a financial partner, they made the golf course better, they made the locker room better, they made the spirit of the event better. Every single thing about it is just they try their hardest and do their best, and if it's at all possible, they're going to try to track it down. So I think to Dick's Corporate, incredible.

And then to John Karedes and his tournament staff, you know, this battle, this sponsor battle's been going on for 140,000 years Being a small town in a big market on the regular tour, so they've been fighting the battle. They're weary, but they're good at it. I know this was huge on their mind. I can't imagine the joy they're feeling being able to make this announcement.

So incredible for a hundred million reasons that we don't have time for, but thank you to both parties, and to the Tour. They had to do some hard thinking from what I understand and figure out -- you know, again, all of our events out here are different from each other. It's not a cookie cutter stamp thing. Each place has its own needs and requests. I'm just thrilled that it all happened.

Sorry to take so long, but that's three parties right there that worked really hard to get it done.

**Q. Just after not being able to come back here last year because of the pandemic, how's it feel to finally be back home for this year?**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Yeah, it's very strange. I don't feel -- it doesn't feel like two years. Well, it's not I guess by calendar, but it doesn't feel like we missed one. I feel like this spot I've been able to spend so much time in and visit with all of you and it feels like home.

And I realize that the form of it will be a little different this year, but those that will be here will be just as excited and thrilled to be here and we're going to be thrilled to be playing golf in

front of them. For me, this is my hometown tournament and nothing feels better than that.

**Q. How are you feeling physically? I know a few months ago you said your back was giving you a problem.**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Yeah, so this is a weird place for me because in 2012 I had back surgery and then I was hurt, I just didn't heal well. I had built -- for the next four, five, six years I've been building a bunch of Band-Aids to play golf with knowing that I wouldn't be as good as I was but wanting to be out here and trying to be competitive as best I could.

I had what I'm going to call a nerve ablation where they kind of burn the nerve and turn it off. Rob Madden did that for me and that was, gosh, last spring. My pain has gone way down. I mean, it's supposed to only last until that nerve grows, back, but it's so far, so good.

Now my problem is trying to find the bread crumbs back to where I was, because I'm far stronger and more capable than I was but I'm without a golf swing that works. I'm kind of in happy and sad land here, but it's fun trying to track it down.

You know, you go to Firestone last week, which is a very fair torture chamber. You've got to be really good, you've got to be on your game to do anything over there. When you're between like I am right now, it's a hard place to play golf. So if you see most of the guys either limping in here or wearing Band-Aids, that's all from last week. The scores here can get quite good because the course is in such great shape and we're all hoping to find ourselves, me included.

**Q. 1983, your first win here. What's a memory that comes to mind when you think of your first win at the BC Open?**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Well, '85. '83 I wish my first win was because I would have been on Tour a year earlier. '85, I had won Greensboro earlier in the year. It was my second year on Tour.

And the story's the same. When you're lucky enough to pull off a win in front of the people who have nurtured you for the whole time, which those of you who are from around here understand what those words mean. They don't just cheer, they take ownership and it's really cool stuff.

There's nothing more fun than winning at home. My caddie, John, we lost him a few years ago, we were together for 26, 27 years, he was on the bag. I've got all -- every time I see the photos, it's a riot. Reliving those days is a blast.

Two years later, in '87, John had to go home, his dad was ill, and my dad caddied and he was on the bag for that day. So both of them enormously special.

**Q. Curious if you know what number start this is for you at En-Joie?**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** No. More than three. You know, let's see. Well, including regular tour, do you know the answer already?

**Q. Yeah, I do.**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** So '83, '93, 2003 -- 35, 36?

**Q. Thirty-five, yeah.**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Somewhere in there. Missed one for injury maybe and missed one last year. Other than that, it's been a really fun ride.

**Q. I'm sorry to bring up something kind of sad, but can you kind of speak to Lonnie Nielsen, who passed away earlier this year? Being from upstate New York, having that kind of connection with him, he won here and just --**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Yeah, Lonnie, that was a sad thing for all of us. Loved, loved guy out here. Fabulous golfer. Came from the PGA ranks, the club pro -- although he dabbled big Tour, but mostly made his living at Crag Burn and I'm not sure of anywhere else. I knew him mostly at Crag burn in Buffalo. What a -- you know, you just always looked forward to your pairing with him. Ultra-competitive, but as soon as he's off the course you, very fun and funny. Loved the guy, brokenhearted to lose him. Great, great guy.

**Q. Ernie Els and Jim Furyk are making their start again at the Dick's Open. What does it mean to you to see somebody like your old friends coming back?**

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Well, it's awesome. Part of what's happened is we've gone -- we have gone from that, you know, in the earliest days of the B.C. Open, you know, all of the tournaments -- we didn't have the weirdness of two events happening in a year, so the field didn't get diluted and all that stuff, so the early years were kind of the big time.

Then as the Tour changed and again here we are, a small market and TV became so big and for a lot of reasons we started being a secondary event, like we would be opposite -- were we ever opposite the British? I can't remember, but opposite something so the fields were diluted and we didn't often see those guys.

I'm thrilled that they're here and I'm also thrilled that they're here in the care of what Dick's Sporting Goods and the agronomy staff and the tournament have done to this golf course because it's a stunner. I think even coming from a place as fabulous as Firestone was, it's going to look good to them. I heard a couple guys talking on the range today about how beautiful the course was. I haven't been out there yet this year. So very fun. Those are the guys I go watch on the range. This is really cool stuff, so I'm very excited they're here.

**Q. Talk about the improvements made. What are some of the things that maybe now you adjust to versus back in the '80s when you were so successful as far as course**

## layouts, some of the things they've done?

**JOEY SINDELAR:** Yeah, you still play. It's funny, I don't think of winning then on a different golf course than it is now. I think I've had a couple of top 5s, and if you're close enough to have a top-5, unless Kevin Sutherland's shooting 63 or whatever he's doing out on the golf course. I think Hal Sutton shot a 62 the last day, the guys are just getting better and better.

I like to describe our world in the '80s and '90s, it was -- the leaderboard score was like two days of sprint. The lead might go 6, 11, and then 12, 13. So it was two days of sprint, two days of chess match I used to call it.

Forget that. You watch it on the big Tour all the time, they just keep going, keep going. It's a sprint, and it's happening out here now. People aren't scared to shoot low scores. In the '80s, if you shot in the 60s either day on the weekend, it was like wow, he held his nerves together and he hit a lot of good shots, and all that does is keep you in position these days. You've really got to go. You know, it's -- the score is going to be good. Unless the weather is weird or really -- the rain won't do it, but wind could do it to keep the scores down, there's going to be a lot of birdies made out there. It's an accessible, fair, fun, golf course. Every golf course doesn't have to be a bloody nose and this is not that. There's five or six holes out there you've really got to watch what you're doing, but it's a fun course to manage. You've got to hit your driver really well out there, and I'll just hopefully have all those things when I stand on the tee Friday.