

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 25, 2021



GEORGE BOWMAN

CONNOR STANGE: We'll get started with George Bowman here. How did it go out there today for you?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Awesome. I had one of the best groups you could ask for, and that's what this is about, playing with these guys and giving them your best work. They were cool. I wish the round wouldn't have ended.

CONNOR STANGE: How's the golf course looking?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Wet, it's playing long. It plays long for me anyways, but not much roll on the tee shots. The greens are receptive, greens are great. No excuses, no nothing, it's just playing long.

Q. How did you play today and is it the kind of round you want to replicate in a couple days?

GEORGE BOWMAN: I would take this ball-striking round for three days and just sit in the clubhouse and watch everybody else. I've been working on something with my swing, it's paying off. I'm hitting it well and I'm looking forward to it. I just need to find 40 yards between now to Friday.

Q. You have a nice resume with your PGA Professional Tour appearances in the past. You come out and play the Ally Challenge after 50, this must be really, really sweet, something you haven't seen in a while.

GEORGE BOWMAN: Another dream, another gift in my life. I battled against these guys in '96, last time I've been on stage at the '96 PGA, a lot of the same faces then. I mean, what more can you ask for? Being with these guys, and it gives me the chills actually standing here right now, I can't believe it. Thank God I have some good friends that believed in me, and the staff here at HNS and Warwick and Ally. It's good to have friends, let's put it that way. They gave me a chance and we're going to have a heck of a time this week. So far, so good. I don't know that it can get any better unless I win it, but I --

Q. You said the weather's kind of toughened the course up a little bit, made it a little longer. What type of score do you think it's going to take to be in the mix on Sunday?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, I don't have any metrics from last year, I don't know how it was playing last year. I think it was playing faster because I don't think they had the rain and 15 under won it last year. You know, God, if you get it to 10 you've probably got a chance. I can

make 10 birdies, I've just got to make sure there's no others.

Q. How key will the iron play be heading into Friday, Saturday and Sunday?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, like every tournament, very key. You've got to drive it well, but there's plenty of room here at Warwick to drive it. With the fairways being so soft, you're not going to get a lot of run-out in the rough, so you can get aggressive, you can attack.

Yeah, I mean, the greens here at Warwick have always been the key since I was a little guy watching it growing up. They've got some tricky pin placements. You get it on the wrong side, get some run-off and yeah, I mean, if you're throwing darts, it makes it a lot easier. You've got to drive it in play here first of all, then you can go from there. The greens are plenty big enough, you can hit a lot of greens, you've just got to hit it close and get lucky, part it of.

Q. What does it mean to you to have this opportunity so close to home?

GEORGE BOWMAN: It happened so quick. Honestly, I can't believe it. What does it mean to me? It just means that I have some good friends and hopefully I can make my members proud. This is about -- I really don't know what this is about for me. This is just about seizing the moment, having some fun, making my sponsors proud, the people that selected me. I just want to play golf really and to do it at this stage is unbelievable. The fact that they believed in me to give me this chance, everything from here on out's a bonus. It means the world. I played the Buick Open, I played Nike Tour, I played in two PGAs and now this is kind of like I check two more boxes. One, I get to play the weekend and I made the cut, right? I'm a lucky guy, really lucky.

Q. Do you have friends and family coming to see you?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Oh, yeah, yeah. I probably have people here that say they're my family and I don't even know them. Yeah, a lot of the members at my club down in Oakhurst down in Clarkston are going to come out and support. It's really, it's unbelievable. I mean, I've been here before this in this situation, but it means so much more at this age. Again, I can't stress enough how surreal this is. It's really cool.

Q. You talked about a celebrity caddie not long ago. Who's going to be on your bag? Somebody of notoriety?

GEORGE BOWMAN: All those guys are busy. I wish they would join me, but they can't do it, they've got other commitments. I really don't want to announce because I haven't -- I told one guy, a good friend of mine in Ann Arbor, that he's caddying for me Saturday and he says, "If we shoot 64, whoever you got Sunday's not getting the job, we're going to keep going."

But the guy that I have for Friday, if I shoot 64 or 66, then he's out of a job Saturday. So

there's a couple unannounced. One guy is very deserving and you know who he is, so I'm probably going to announce that here in the next day or two.

Yeah, it would have been fun. Dave Coulier was going to do it, but he's up north camping with Joey Kocur and some of his buddies so he's out. I can't afford the rest of them.

Q. I see you've got on a Red Wings hat. Why not Lions or Pistons? Why you have to go with them?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, because I run the Red Wing Alumni, I'm the secretary and I played goal for them. My grandfather played for the Red Wings in the '30s and I guess I've got Red Wing blood in me and that's where my allegiance is, and I'm a hockey fan and have been since the day I was born. The Red Wings blood is closer to me, strong. And plus, like I said, I work for them and run a lot of charity work for them. Joey Kocur's our president and gives me free rein to do my thing, and I play about 20 games a year, so very honored and very privileged to be able to do that, too.

Q. When you say runs through your blood, so should we expect any fireworks out here or anything like that? No hip checks, no elbows?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Depends who I'm playing with and how they act. I'll be honest, being a goalie, you're not real stable to begin with so you never know what's going to come out of me. I promise I won't throw a club, but the guys I'm playing with got to keep their head up.

Q. For you, you said you had experience with this course as a kid. What was that experience? Like how often were you here? When did you start playing here?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, I grew up in Flushing, like I said, which is right down the street. I didn't start playing golf until I was 15. I was lucky to play with probably one of the best junior golf programs in the country in Flint Junior Golf, which is part of the beneficiary here for this.

Back then we had 1,100 juniors in the program and it was second to none. Bob Bernstein ran it and Mark Engelman and all the names, Bob -- Steve Braun, a legend in the area. So to be fortunate enough to be part of that program and also be able to play Warwick, which is in the rotation with Davison and Flint and Flushing and Swartz Creek, (indiscernible), we were really lucky to have this in the rotation, and Flint Golf Club. I played it as a kid, caddied here in the Buick Open for Bill Bonds, I carried standard boards in Lanny Wadkins' group. So this has a lot of roots here for me, so it's cool.

Q. Are you a Flushing grad?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Yeah. I'm not telling you the year, but you know it's before '86 or else I wouldn't be in the tournament. I just had my 40th the other night, class reunion.

Q. I thought you were going to say birthday.

GEORGE BOWMAN: I keep celebrating my, what, this would be my 18th celebration of my 40th birthday, 17th.

Q. And you're with, of course, the Detroit Red Wings Alumni chapter. I know they did some, put some money out to help the IGNITE program with the Genesee County Sheriff's Office, so could you kind of give some details about the charity work that the alumni chapter does?

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, at that point Joey Kocur and I came up with Sheriff Swanson, right, about two months ago and donated \$5,000 for, what are those, ocular -- these new headsets that they use to help them with the trades and built some trades for the inmates. When they asked us to do it, it was no hesitation trying to help them. I think the UAW bought one, we bought one, \$5,000 apiece. We said, this is not even a question, we don't even have to ask for a vote, we're going to get behind it because the progress that Sheriff Swanson has with that program is off the charts.

Outside of that, we do a lot of the charity work all year long. Joe Kocur's got a foundation, we have an event next Monday at Prestwick for the Kocur Foundation. He usually raises over \$100,000 in one day and that's going to go to local children or fallen police officers or fire. He mixes it up every year.

So couldn't be any more lucky to be part of that organization that gives back. The cool thing is we get to play hockey, what we love to do, and help those in need. We haven't met a bad charity yet. If anybody's interested in playing the Red Wing Alumni, go on the website and we're glad to play anywhere, anyhow, anybody for any money.

Q. Seems like a lot of hockey players are going for golf in the offseason. Do you draw a correlation between the two sports that you think is --

GEORGE BOWMAN: Well, two important things. Eye-hand coordination and we're on the same plane. The puck's on the ice, ball's on the ground. Baseball, not so much.

I remember when I first started at Oakhurst, I gave a lesson to Kirk Gibson, who's a member at our place, and I said, "Gibby, when you hit the big ball, those two big homers, what did you do? Did you do this?"

He goes, "Not even close, I just threw my hands and the ball went out of the park."

So couldn't help him. Still can't. So when the ball's on that plane and we're hockey players, and golfers are playing when the ball's on the ground or puck's on the ground, there's a lot of correlation. The only difference in hockey versus golf is in hockey you hit it fat and that doesn't work in golf. So you hit it fat to flex the stick, so in golf you want to obviously hit the ball first. Yeah, there's hip rotation, balance, center of gravity, all those things are very

correlated. Plus, just love the sport. I want to do what they're doing, they want to do what I'm doing.