

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 15, 2021



JIM FURYK

CONNOR STANGE: Jim Furyk, set to make his debut here at the Sanford International. Can you just give us some opening thoughts to being here in Sioux Falls?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's nice to be here. I've actually seen this event on TV, saw good friend Steve Stricker win one year, kind of had a little idea of what the finish looked like.

You know, nice to be here. Heard a lot good about it. I was in Kohler with Steve and Davis and Fred Couples, so heard a lot about the golf course and the tournament and excited to be here.

Q. Thoughts on the field? You have all the defending champs, yourself, Steve's obviously here. Just your thoughts on the depth of the field?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's a good field. The guys talked a lot -- a lot of positive comments not only about the golf course but really about the tournament in general, the support of the community, the crowd. They say they get a bunch of folks here and it's kind of an exciting week for us to play. When a community supports an event, when there's a lot of fans on the golf course, there's a lot of excitement and a buzz about it, it's fun for us to play and that's what I hear this event is like.

Q. What did you learn about the golf course yesterday in your practice round?

JIM FURYK: Really just trying to get some lines off tees. I usually use day one just to kind of get a general idea of what to expect. I'll have the pro-am today and it's going to be a lot windier. It was nice, kind of a perfect day of weather yesterday so kind of got to see the golf course in a little bit of a neutral type setting. Today the wind's going to blow. I looked at the weather for the rest of the week and we're going to see the wind's going to flip on Friday and then turn around back to the same way it will be today on Saturday, Sunday.

Just trying to get lines off tees, get a feel for -- the greens are somewhat large, but there's a lot of movement on them, pretty severe. So I'll try to kind of narrow down pin placements, the greens today, try to get a better feel for the golf course and hopefully be comfortable.

I'm not in the pro-am tomorrow, I have a day off and I see that it's going to be quite windy, so I'm probably not too sad about that, to be honest with you. Tomorrow we'll just kind of hone in on my game and feel good about my swing, my short game.

Q. Jim, how do you feel about playing an old-fashioned type golf course that's in the mid range with distance as opposed to some of these bombers you guys play on the

PGA TOUR?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's one of the reasons I like kind of -- why I really enjoy the Champions Tour. Not the only reason, but I joke that I got to know my 4- and 5-iron really well playing the PGA TOUR and kind of missed hitting the 8, 9 and wedge into par 4s. I get an opportunity now to attack a little bit more at times and get some shorter irons in my hand and make a few more birdies. It's a lot of fun.

No one -- as amateurs get older, it's very common that they -- if they grew up playing the blue tees, they want to play the blue tees. It's hard to move up to the whites. When they finally do, they go, wow, this is fun, why didn't I do this earlier, I should have been doing this five years ago. That's kind of what coming out to the Champions Tour, I'm back to kind of playing like I was maybe in my mid 30s on the PGA TOUR and hitting a lot of those same clubs in.

Still, good golf courses we're playing. It's still challenging, but you can see by the scores that we shoot and the way the golf courses are set up, it looks like -- last week I want to say 10 under won. That was a pretty high score for a winning score out here on the Champions Tour, so a good, hard test of golf. Depending on the conditions and the wind this week and the severity of the greens, I can see the same thing if conditions are right.

Q. I can think back to 30 years ago on the Senior Tour, what it was called then, it was just kind of for guys to float off into retirement. Now it's just ridiculously competitive with the players that you're playing with. How excited were you to join the Champions Tour and how exciting is it for you to play with such great competition?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I mean, no one really looks forward to turning 50 and getting older, but I kind of spent last year, last season I played quite a bit on the PGA TOUR and a little bit on the Champions Tour. Just kind of wanted to dip my toe in the pool and see what I thought and give it a go and I just really enjoyed it. I played about six events I think last calendar year and kind of made my mind up that I was going to kind of turn the page this year when our tour heated up or kind of got going early May this year. We had a few events canceled earlier in the year, Morocco, Japan, Newport, I may be missing one, but that spring season was a little thin so I played the PGA TOUR some, and then when May came around, I haven't looked back and played the Champions Tour full time.

I've enjoyed it, I've enjoyed seeing old friends. Again, I've enjoyed being able to be a little more aggressive on some of the golf courses and attack and I've gotten in the hunt a little bit more. But overall, yeah, I think our tour's in a really strong spot. Just off the top of my head, you know, Ernie Els, Retief Goosen, Davis Love, Freddie Couples, Bernhard Langer, Scott McCarron, Jerry Kelly, Kevin Sutherland, you just keep going down the list, Mike Weir. There's an amazing group of players, so we've got some great competition.

And hopefully the fans -- you know, a lot of those guys are in the Hall of Fame and brings the fans out to watch and see us play and we enjoy it.

Q. Jim, how are you sort of balancing everything these days with playing and obviously your event's coming up and obviously next week is a big week for you guys, too? How are you sort of balancing it all?

JIM FURYK: I'm not real good at kind of doing the balancing act. I'm pretty simple, so one thing at a time. I enjoy it. I was in Kohler on Monday, watched some of our guys play the golf course. I really enjoy helping Strick, he's a good friend, I enjoy being part of it. It was my favorite event to play in, so now, you know, and I really looked up to a lot of the guys that were my captains, vice captains and to spend some time with and now I kind of find myself, it's come full circle and I find myself really enjoying being with some of the younger players and would like to get to know -- I don't know Scottie Scheffler very well, I don't know a couple of the guys on the team or their games. I've met Collin Morikawa, I've played alongside him on the PGA TOUR, but don't know his game as well. I know it's solid.

So it's an opportunity to see those guys play and compete and get to know them a little bit better is really -- it's important to me and a lot of fun for me. I'm enjoying kind of helping Strick and be a part of it and my mind's kind of on it. Kind of every morning and evening before I go on the course and off the course, I'm kind of looking forward to next week and trying to make any adjustments week to help Strick out.

Then my mind's going three weeks from now, we have our Constellation Furyk & Friends, so it will be a first-time event. So there's a lot of stress always going along with that, but we have a good team in place and I tried not to stick my thoughts in there too often and screw the progress up and the flow they have going. I answer questions when they're asked and help out. We were working on a few things last night and this morning.

So I'm enjoying it. I'm really looking forward to having an event. It's a great golf course, it's my hometown, our foundation's running it and I couldn't be more proud of the event and Tabitha and all the hard work that they've done.

Q. You talked about the Ryder Cup was your favorite thing ever to play in. Obviously is that because of the team aspect and playing for your country and just all the stuff that you never get to do otherwise?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I grew up playing team sports, so that's part of it. I played football, basketball and baseball before I really kind of honed in on golf. My best friends in high school and junior high were from the teams I played on and I still keep in touch with a lot of those folks.

I don't know, there's just a special bond, especially when you accomplish something. You know, winning team, folks that come together, you have those bonds for life. So I've enjoyed the camaraderie and that. I mean, we rarely get a chance to put the American flag on our clothing and represent our country and something greater and it was an honor to be able to do that for all those years. It's an honor to be a captain on a team that's doing that.

And then I'm a giant football fan. If you -- what do I want to do on Saturday and Sunday, I want to cook and eat and watch football, maybe have a beer. That's kind of my favorite thing to do on the weekend. And the best way I can kind of describe the Ryder Cup, it's kind of like a football game broke out at a golf tournament. It's always very one-sided, the fans are boisterous and loud and I enjoy it. Whether it's home or away, I really enjoy that atmosphere. I love the USA chants, I love everyone in the place rooting for you. And I love going to Europe and kind of being the out there on an island sometimes in your singles match feeling like there's 50,000 people and every one of them's rooting against you and it's kind of you versus them. I enjoyed that atmosphere and you just don't see it that often in golf. You wrap that all together, it's a cool event.

And it's a bummer that we weren't able to play last year, but the fans in Wisconsin are great sports fans, they supported the PGAs. I played three PGAs there, they came out in droves. It's probably going to be difficult for some of the European fans, a little more difficult this year to travel with all the regulations and that, so I really see -- I see our fans being loud and boisterous. For goodness sakes, the captain is from Wisconsin, so it's just kind of a perfect scenario and really happy for Strick, too.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

JIM FURYK: I agree, I agree. It just wouldn't be the same. I think it's the one thing that really makes -- well, there's so many things, but it's the one thing that glaringly sticks out about that event that makes it so much different than any other. Just the fans and the noise level and the cheering and really the one-sided cheering for the most part I think is special. And I think it's special at home and away. I would imagine the Europeans embrace that when they come to the U.S., they embrace that as well, right? They embrace it being their 12 versus 50,000.

Q. How's Strick doing?

JIM FURYK: Well, well. He's doing a great job, I think all of us as vice captains would agree. He's extremely organized, he's got a great plan set out in front of him and it's our job to help him execute it and put those players in great positions. I'm excited about all the work we've done and also I just think the direction that he's leading this team, I think he's putting them in good spots.

Q. With four of you here in Sioux Falls this weekend, how much Ryder Cup strategy are we talking after the rounds?

JIM FURYK: I'm sure we'll get together for some dinners. We just spent like two days together. I feel like I've lived with Freddie and Davis the last couple days, so they're probably tired of me. They'll probably give it a couple days before they invite me back to dinner.

Yeah, I'm sure we'll get together. We're always chatting. I talk to Strick and I texted with

Strick this morning and also talked with Davis this morning, just kind of always little key things we hear and see and think about. We're just kind of putting it all together. It's fun. It's a giant puzzle and it seems like it's coming together pretty nicely.

Q. Back to this tour, every year there's a couple two, three new rookies, young kids who come in at age 50. How were you received by the rest of the guys that are going, oh, gosh here's another guy to take our paycheck?

JIM FURYK: I think it's different. I don't see -- I think what we really want is our tour to be as strong and as solid as it can be, right? Where when guys turn 50, what I'm really hoping is that they kind of do what I did, like if there's a question. For some guys, they just want to come out and play the Champions Tour immediately, but if they're still competitive, if they're still playing on Tour, I want them to kind of come out and dip a toe in the pool, I want them to see this tour and I want them to play and I want them to say, you know what, I really enjoy it out here, and come out and play.

I was the opposite. I felt like when I got here, guys were like, oh, man it's so great to have you out, you know, and every guy we can add that turns 50 to this tour, it just makes us all more -- it makes the tour better as a whole and I think that's what we all want.