

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 3, 2022

DENNY McCARTHY



DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Denny McCarthy to the interview room here at the Wells Fargo Championship.

Denny, thanks for joining us. I know this is a special tournament, especially when it's in your neck of the woods. Just a few comments on being here. And I know Florida is now where you are, but just kind of an old home for you.

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, it feels great to be back here this week. When they decided to come back here, obviously Quail is hosting the Presidents Cup, this is one that I've had circled on my calendar for a little while. Excited to be back here. I played here in 2018.

The course is in unbelievable shape. I played nine Sunday, nine Monday, I played nine today. Just I probably haven't played as many rounds as you would think on this place, but I've played it enough to get my way around it. So it was nice to get out there the last few days and get some nice prep work in. The course is in amazing shape, so really excited to play it this week.

DOUG MILNE: Do you still have a lot of friends, any family still in the area that are hitting you up for tickets and everything else?

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, yeah, I'm -- Becky, who books all my travel, she's a saint, I'm sending all the ticket requests to her this week. So thank you, Becky, for handling all that in advance.

Yeah, it will be nice to have a crowd out here Thursday and Friday. Hopefully, I can make some noise and play well on the weekend and maybe gather a few more people on the weekend would be pretty cool.

DOUG MILNE: And one more question from me, then we'll take a few from you guys. Seven top-25s, two of those top-10s, just some thoughts on how you're feeling about your game heading into the week.

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, I've played really solid all year. I think I've only missed three cuts out of 19 events so I've been playing really solid. You know, I haven't really had many great results lately, but that doesn't mean my game's not in a good spot. I played all four Florida events, made all those cuts. Got caught in a few of the bad waves, which is obviously going to happen. I've still been playing good golf. I haven't seen my name up top as much as I would have liked, but I'm still working on the right things. And my game feels really good and I'm starting to hit it really well to give myself a lot of looks. I've still been

putting well, too, I just haven't really made as much as I'm used to seeing go in, but I know if I just keep doing what I'm doing, good things are right around the corner.

Q. You won titles at Prep just down the road here. How much do you stay in touch with those guys, your teammates from high school, and did you get a chance to play before the renovations here and sort of how have you seen the course evolve since those renovations have taken place?

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, I still -- I've talked to a bunch of my buddies this week. It sounds like some of them might be coming out this weekend. I like to call them "working stiff," so they're working during the week and hopefully they can come out on the weekend.

And yes, I have played -- I don't remember the old course as much. I probably played it half a dozen times before the redo as a junior kid, local junior kid in the area and I've probably played it about a dozen times after the redo, so I don't remember much.

I remember -- before they redid it, I think I was like 12 or 13 years old and I played -- the first time I ever played here I shot like 1-under 70 from like maybe the ladies tees or a combo and it was like my best round ever on a golf course, so I remember I do have that nice memory. I know it was on the older course, but I remember it felt like that round, it was like I knew I was going to play a hard golf course and I treated it like a U.S. Open and I played well that day. So that was a nice feeling as a young kid to know that I could play a hard golf course well.

Yeah, I'm excited for the week. Like I said, the course is in unbelievable shape. They did a great job on the redo. It's a hard golf course, there's not many let-up holes out there. You're going to have to hit the ball in the fairway, the rough is up in some spots. It's just a good, hard golf course. You've got to take on a lot of shots and there's not much bail out.

Q. Kind of as a follow-up, having grown up in the area, where does the golf enthusiasm for this area kind of rank? Everyone loves golf around this area.

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, there's so much good golf in this area. Obviously Congressional right down the street, Burning Tree right down the street from that. I grew up, Argyle Country Club is mine. People probably don't know much about that, but, you know, Chevy Chase, Colombia Country Club, Woodmont. I do the sectional at Woodmont every year. There's just so much good golf in the area.

I felt that growing up I was lucky at Argyle Country Club, we had a great junior program. A lot of kids similar to my age, we all get dropped off in the summer, we're playing golf all day and I was very lucky to have that growing up. And that's kind of -- Argyle is kind of where I fell in love with the game and that's definitely where my enthusiasm has come from.

Q. I think we all know what you can do on the greens, you're one of the best putters on the PGA Tour. Like Doug said, you're having a great season, very consistent. Your

ball-striking's starting to tick up a little bit. Do you put any added emphasis on that over the offseason or kind of what are you working on with the full swing?

DENNY McCARTHY: I do, yeah. I'm trying to get my body stronger right now. I like what I'm working on with my coach. His name's Brian Creggan. A lot of things, how my body's moving, if I'm loading properly and getting into my left side properly, a lot of things, if I'm doing those things with my body well, the club is falling in a really good spot. So instead of focusing on what I'm doing with the club, if I can focus on the things I'm doing with my body and getting my body right, I've seen some really good improvements with what the club's doing.

I've driven it great this year. I'm not somebody who's going to gain a ton of shots off the tee just because I'm a medium length hitter, but I've been driving it really straight. My iron game, like you mentioned, it's definitely making some improvements. Then if I could just get myself a couple more looks around here and there, a couple more chances, that obviously plays into my hands.

Q. As a young man, did you come to the tournaments like here and Congressional a lot? And was there a point where you said to yourself, that's what I want to do, and was there another point where you said, maybe I really can do that?

DENNY McCARTHY: I don't think there was ever a point. You know, I did come to some like former Booz Allen Classics and the Kemper Open and the Quicken Loans, AT&T National at Congressional, went to a few of those.

I don't think there was ever a point I went to those tournaments, like wasn't ever a clicking point where this is the moment where this is where I wanted to become a professional golfer. I think just, I'm such a competitive person, I think just as I went along and progressed and just, you know, continued to love the game and I was just always somebody that was like trying to find little ways to get better. That just kept progressing and it's kind of progressed at every level from junior, the local junior area to taking it nationally to taking it to a college level to amateur, I've kind of been on a steady incline. That's just -- I think that's just from me just always trying to find ways to get better, just my competitive nature.

So I can't say there was ever a time where like I've always wanted to become a professional golfer, it's just like I've just always wanted to get better and that's kind of how I've always looked at it.

Q. Kind of a follow-up to that, when you got on this tour, what did you find you really needed to do better?

DENNY McCARTHY: Driving the ball, ball-striking. I was always kind of a gritty competitor, short game, get it up and down on long golf courses. I never had the firepower to be able to attack longer golf courses. I've gained some length, which has helped. Obviously a lot of the golf courses we play are getting longer, but I've always become a much straighter driver of

the golf ball and I've kind of realized I don't need to -- I might gain a few more miles an hour here or there, but I'm always going to be kind of middle of the pack distance-wise, which is fine for me. I'm 5' 9", I'm not a very big kid, so I'm fine with that.

I think taking an approach like, say, Collin Morikawa, he doesn't -- he hits it a very similar length to me, he just so happens to be one of the most elite ball-strikers we've seen in a long time. I think if I can get a little closer towards that model of being more precise with my irons, I know what I can do on the greens. I think if I can just get a little closer to being a little more precise and dialed in with my irons, that's going to do really well for me.

Q. It's also well documented that you played some hoops here in the area at Georgetown Prep. I'm curious, A, do you still play basketball, pickup or otherwise, and B, as a teenager, do you think that impacted your golf game at all?

DENNY McCARTHY: For sure, yeah. I'm actually going to the Wizards facility here in an hour or two to go do -- I don't know if we're doing a 3-point contest, but I'm going to shootaround. Yes, I still shoot around a lot. I have a hoop in my backyard in Florida. Some days when I'm not playing golf, I still like to stay active and go out and shoot around.

Yeah, sorry, what was the second part of the question?

Q. I'm curious, because you played at a pretty good school, Georgetown Prep, do you think that had any impact on your golf game at all?

DENNY McCARTHY: I never played golf in the winter until my first year of college, so that was kind of an adjustment for me. I always played golf spring, summer, fall and then I'd put the clubs away for four months and play basketball. Basketball was probably my first love, honestly.

Like I mentioned, I'm 5' 9", that was never a realistic future for me. I love basketball, I love the team aspect of it. I mentioned I'm super competitive, so I played on some really good teams growing up and I just had so much fun with it. We were winning games, maybe games we weren't supposed to. People underestimating our size or our team and I just, I embraced that challenge. I loved playing basketball. I'm excited to go shoot this afternoon.

Q. You mentioned your love of basketball. How much do you get a chance to follow UVA hoops? Obviously a national championship not that long ago was pretty huge.

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, I went to that national championship game actually. Ben Kohles, who regained his Tour card this year, him and I went to that national championship game. Unbelievable experience, so glad we were able to do that.

I try and watch every game that I can. They've had some really, really good teams. They're fun to watch. Maybe not to most people because they play a little slower pace, they play defense, but defense wins games. They're one of the best defensive teams in the country

every year. And I appreciate the effort that Tony Bennett and everybody buys into his system. I enjoy watching that because I see how hard they work.

Q. Have you had a chance to communicate with Tony at all over the years?

DENNY McCARTHY: Not really. I talk with Dr. Bob Rotella a decent amount and we've tried to put together -- I'd love to go to Charlottesville and play a round with -- Doc and I have talked about it -- with me, Tony, Doc and maybe Ben. I think that would be really cool.

I met Tony when I was at UVA, but haven't really talked to him that much, but I think that would be really cool. UVA just came out, Davis Love just redid their whole facility, Birdwood. I visited the facility, but the course wasn't open yet. So I would love to go and play. I think that would be really cool to be able to play with Tony and Doc.

Q. Another famous UVA graduate athlete just announced his retirement, Ryan Zimmerman. I don't know if you are friends with him or kind of know him at all?

DENNY McCARTHY: I don't really know him. That's the only D.C. team I'm not -- I grew up an Orioles fan because the Nats didn't come along until I was 13 or whatever, but I still do root for the Nats. I'm a Caps fan. Game one tonight, 7:00, 7:30.

And the Nats, I don't really know Ryan Zimmerman. I think it would be cool to meet him as well. Obviously he had a great career and legacy here in D.C. and he was loved by the fans, I know that. I think it was really cool what he did here.

Q. You mentioned earlier that maybe Collin Morikawa's kind of a model of the kind of the player maybe you want to be. Have you consciously imitated anybody or has anybody acted as a mentor to you at this level?

DENNY McCARTHY: Not really. I mean, I've played -- I live down in Jupiter, I've played with a handful of guys down there. More so I would say when I play with guys out here on tour, you're always trying to learn something. So when I play with guys that do something really well, I'm paying attention to see like, man, this guy does this really well, I like his technique when he does certain shots, I like what he does.

Then you kind of go and you start to work on those things and maybe try and implement that into your arsenal a little bit. You can learn a lot. Everyone out here is so good and you can really learn a lot just by the guys you play with and watching them a little bit. To me, that's in one of those ways I mentioned always trying to get better. That's a way that I've always -- I like watching guys that I'm playing with and realize, you know, man, that guy does that really well, I think I can try and implement that into my game a little bit and make that part of my game a little stronger. I think I'm always trying to learn from guys out here just whoever I'm playing with during a given week.

Q. And in terms of off-the-course stuff, in terms of time management, you mentioned

you're working on your physical fitness. I mean, what have you learned over the last couple years about those aspects?

DENNY McCARTHY: Just, you know, if I'm playing consecutive weeks in a row, if I'm playing two or three weeks in a row and then I'm home for an off week, I won't touch the clubs for two or three days but I'll get in the gym and kind of get my body moving.

Three weeks on the road is really tiring on the body, so making sure I'm getting back home in the gym, getting my body feeling right and stronger. It's a nice break. Like if you have a week off, you take three days off and then you're kind of -- Wednesday comes around, you're kind of excited to get back into it. Your body feels good, you were just in the gym the last few days and you're ready to kind of get back into it.

I think just time management wise and saving some energy. It's a really long season and I've played a lot of events the last few years, so my body doesn't quite feel like it did five years ago, but I'm doing the things necessary to kind of make sure it feels good to go and compete and give myself a chance to win every week.

I feel like I've come a long way. Like I said, the results haven't really showed it lately, but I really like where my game has trended. I'm excited for this week and the rest of the year.

DOUG MILNE: Okay. Well, Denny, thank you. I know we've got a couple for you right outside, but thank you for your time here. Hopefully see you right back here Sunday night.

DENNY McCARTHY: Thanks. That sounds good.