

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 17, 2022



JOEY SINDELAR

DOUG MILNE: Obviously some great ties to the area, but you've got a great resume here, two wins, the B.C. Open, four top-5 finishes on Champions Tour. Just some thoughts on being back here this week?

JOEY SINDELAR: Well, it's an interesting thing playing at home. Now I've had about a thousand years of experience watching players, being a player at home and watching others, there's some division line. Some guys don't do well at it and some do. Like I think O'Meara just keeps winning in California, plenty of examples of guys like that, but others don't.

When you're playing at home, it becomes busy. You're trying to -- these are your peeps, these are the people that have cheered for you all the way through, so there's tickets to leave and probably dinners to have and all that stuff.

And it's funny, I don't know why, but I've done well. I think maybe they talk me into it. I'll tell you, it's the darndest thing when you're inside the ropes at your home tournament, and for the superstars it may be like this anyway with everybody cheering for them every week, but when I'm here it's so fun because if it's a couple of birdies in a row everybody's -- because you're on the inside and you're looking out and everybody's marching and going fast. And boy, if you get a bogey, a double or a couple in a row, it's like the energy goes down. It's very interesting because they look how I feel.

Q. Is there anything you're looking forward to most being back here kind of close to home?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yeah, I mean, it's a lot of things. This is the chance to see friends that have been part of my golf life for my life for so long. I think my first tournament here was in '82 or in '83, so we're coming up on 40 years' worth of people just being so in my corner, it's awesome. And as mentioned, I've had luck here. To have a couple of wins at home and plenty of other top-10 finishes through the years, it's been a blast. It's a chance for -- we're so busy and on the road that it's a chance to just regroup with people and have fun.

And then just the success of this tournament. Small market, fighting the battles of a small-market tournament on the regular tour and now being a really big event on the Champions Tour. Dick's Sporting Goods has made a lot of things possible for this event and it's so cool to come back and see the improvements year after year after year. It just keeps getting better and it's thrilling to watch.

And really, honestly, no garbage here, the guys love playing here. They can sense the

involvement. We play a lot of cool places. We play in big cities and small cities and near oceans and near Finger Lakes and the guys just feel welcomed here. It's an easy week. Unless there's some weird construction, you're not going to miss your tee time because of traffic. The food's good and they just feel welcomed, so it's fun all the way around.

Q. Any particular favorite memories in the years playing here?

JOEY SINDELAR: Endless, endless. Probably the one that sticks, my dad caddied for me at one of the wins, which how do you replace that?

I remember the year -- I'm confused on the years.

(Cell phone interruption.)

JOEY SINDELAR: Oh, excuse me. It must be you calling to see if I'm going to get here. It's a spam risk, it is you.

DOUG MILNE: It is me. Amazing how many people think that.

JOEY SINDELAR: Let me start over. So the year my dad caddied for me, irreplaceable, best ever. I can remember, and I get the years confused, it was '85 and '87, one year I had an absurd amount of fun in the middle like in the four-round tournament at the old B.C. Open. Had like a six-shot lead and Slu was next, our Rochester guy, another New York state guy, and we were paired together in the last group. By mistake I birdied No. 1. The pin was tucked by the water and I wasn't aiming at the flag, but I pulled it toward the flag and birdied. So I'm up 7 with 17 holes to play.

Slu played a round of golf, I still think he should have beat me. I didn't play bad, but he hit every shot perfect, every par 5 he rolled the ball past the pin in two it seemed like. I thought he was going to eagle every hole and I think I only won by a couple. He put the pressure on and I got lucky.

There's just all kinds of cool moments. Then at the same time some of the scores that have been shot here through the years not by me, by others. I think Hal Sutton might have started the parade way back when with like a low 60s round late on Sunday, and there have been several since.

It's just fun for me to have our local people see this awesome golf. And the players, as you know, are getting better by the year. I'm getting older, they're getting younger, 50 gets younger, but the guys are more prepared. They knew it was coming. I'm 64, I think at my age and older, the guys weren't waiting for it, didn't stay eligible for as long on the regular tour getting here and now they're like, no, I want to do that. And it shows, they're still working hard and shooting great scores. Really cool stuff.

Q. What are your thoughts every year as you see kind of the course develop, too?

What's your take on the challenge here?

JOEY SINDELAR: Well, it's really, again, I'm a lot of years here. High school sectionals, there were like five trees on the whole course and none of these ponds.

Then Alex, Alexander, got on this tree planting thing that we always laugh about. For a number of years I felt that it was overgrown. It got very dense here. Now they've gotten it to this perfect blend of they've weeded some things back, they've raised the trees back, the grounds, there's room. So it's a very defined treed property, but you don't feel like you're on a tree-lined bowling alley.

And the grass quality, again, this is clear thinking on the staff here at the course, the superintendent and his staff. It's all the help that Dick's provides and John Karedes doing a great job with his team. In the '70s the Tour players used to brag about the greens and then for a while it didn't seem like that, it didn't seem like it was the leading edge of what we see out here. All the guys this week have said, wow, is the course in great condition. And they don't even know we've had a drought here, so it's awesome.

Q. Do top-10 finishes, wins, does that take on any extra added meaning when you play here as opposed to other tournaments that you play in other places?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yes, everything's magnified here. You just want to do your best here, for me here at home. Yes, and that keeps everybody who comes to watch, my blood's pumping, their blood's pumping, keeps it exciting.

There's some hard shots coming in. The tee shot on 15 always gets everybody's attention. No. 17's a tough par 3, and then although 18's not a hard hole, you've still got to hit the tee shot and I've spent a little bit of time in the left water and a lot of time in the right concrete bleachers over there. I think before I even hit it these days I call the official in advance because I know I'm going to need some help doing something. Yes, so it's very cool.