

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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JERRY KELLY

Q. Jerry, welcome back to the American Family Insurance Championship. You are a two-time champ here. Just overall thoughts on being back this week and going for another title?

JERRY KELLY: It's just always nice being back home. This will always be home obviously, but you know, just getting out on the back porch and looking over the lake just gives me a nice calm. I love being back.

MODERATOR: Absolutely. Can you just assess where your game is right now? You've got five top-10s this season, your own host tournament you were T-2.

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I haven't had much game this year. Short game is keeping me in it. I don't have a whole lot of strength, things just keep popping up. It's not fun, but it's repairable. I've just got to get through the beginning stages and hopefully work out again and get some strength back up and get rolling. But I'm glad I had at least some good finishes at the start. It's a little work right now, but it's OK.

MODERATOR: Being back home, you always have such a good crowd following as well here. Talk about that fan support and how it gives you so much energy going into the weekend.

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I'm looking forward to getting some energy. I need to soak it in, no question. I hope they come out and I hope I've got some followers, but I'm going to need everything they give me, that's for sure.

Q. Usually I don't get serious with you, but when Steve left he kind of hinted toward a little bit of -- we talked retirement with him a little bit. He kind of hinted a little bit, would everybody agree? I don't want to be the only one to say this, but -- and he didn't say -- he didn't leave and never come back, but is that something you've thought about? I know injuries have been more and more often. I don't want you to retire.

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I mean, I told my wife 60, you know, I was feeling like 65, I feel like about should have happened at 55 now. Yeah, I'm looking forward to working, getting myself back. I'm not retiring anytime soon. I've got -- I've got some more things to accomplish. I mean, this is definitely a bump for me and it's going to take a lot of effort. I'm looking forward to putting that effort in into the right places when I'm able to. Haven't been able to and that's what's kind of put me further down into a hole. Yeah, I'm definitely not going to stop when I'm down, that's not going to happen.

Q. Jerry, some of us just saw an interview with you I think you did today maybe regarding rheumatoid arthritis. You danced around it up there. How much has that affected your game and how are you -- how is it being treated?

JERRY KELLY: It's affecting me a lot. My hands locked up, it went to my feet, my ankles, my knees. It's probably been lying in my back for longer than I'd like. I went back and looked at some of the blood tests in '08 and '13 and I had some pretty R.A. numbers. Still playing on the PGA TOUR, so I probably was like ah, whatever.

I felt the effects early this year and finally Carol was like, this is not normal. You know, I can't get out of a chair, can't get out of bed. It's time you go find out what's going on. I had been through the rigors of Mayo and all the blood testing and all that kind of stuff.

Finally went to a homeopath and they did some really extensive testing, found out I was positive for lyme, and whether that sparked the R.A. or my R.A. numbers are because the lyme is so bad, that's where I need to find out.

So I've gone on this chemo drug, methotrexate. Small levels compared to what normal chemo patients take. It's just kind of a first line of defense trying to get those white blood cells that are killing you from the inside, they're eating healthy tissue. Got to my lungs, got to my esophagus, my stomach. It didn't get to my heart, which that's one place that it gets to, so I'm thankful for that. I went through a week in Newport where I couldn't eat. Anything that I ate was just getting attacked from the inside. I feel like my lungs are getting a little bit better.

It's taken a lot of muscle away from me, and the fatigue is real. You know, I just felt a couple times where I couldn't get the adrenaline up for tournaments. You know, I have a hard time playing without adrenaline.

I let Lucas know first outside of my family. He's going through a tough battle with stage 4 colon cancer, so I wanted to be able to pump him up with what we're doing with the Cologuard tournament, then I wanted to let him know that other battles are there too and I was going through this. That's the first time I made it public and it's been going on for a while.

I'm tired of getting those texts, what's going on, this isn't you. Yeah, I used the old Aaron Rodgers, relax, relax, take some time, but I'm ready to fight. When I can get the energy up to fight, I will be there. And I'm fighting without the energy right now. I know that's tough on me, but everybody's going through stuff out here. We're getting up there in age, and I didn't want to "woe is me" anything, but I've gotten enough people asking that it's like, yeah, it isn't me, there is something going on. You know, I'm just going to work myself through it and that's all we do.

Q. Jerry, when you talk about the struggle that this is, like why is it that you think

you're still able to continue pushing, continue playing because I'm sure a lot of guys in your position would say, hey, let me take a couple months off and get my body right. You might be doing it in reverse a little bit playing through it.

JERRY KELLY: I'll quote Coach Maurice on that one, "There ain't no fuckin' quit in me," OK?

You can bleep that one out all you want. I'm not going to quit. I've gotten down on myself fairly hard because my body's not responding to my brain, things like that. There's a little disconnect going on and that bothers me, but there's still -- there's still the fight. As long as there's a fight left to be fought, I'm going to be in the mix, I'm going to be in the middle of it.

So I expect myself to play well this week. It's a course that I really like. I'm going to try and find a way, that's all I'm going to try and do every single week, every single day. Yeah, I've got a few years to figure it all out.

Q. Just when were you diagnosed with this?

JERRY KELLY: That was -- what month is it now?

Q. June.

JERRY KELLY: I don't know, I'm on my eighth week of treatment. That was a good seven-and-a-half weeks of being dry, too. I didn't think I could do that one, either. Nobody thought I could do that one.

Again, you do what you have to do. It's one of the things I have to do. You know, diagnoses or when is this really hitting me, that I can't tell you, but I think it's been years. As they say, you can sit in a tub of lukewarm water and you'll boil to death before you realize that it's gradually going up in temperature every 15 minutes. You can't even set your foot in boiling water.

I've been boiling for a while I think. Yeah, it was time to get something done.

Q. And the other thing I wanted to ask, you're No. 1 in driving accuracy, you're No. 1 in scrambling, you're No. 2 in three-putt avoidance, you're No. 7 in GIR. All your stats are there. Other than the physical stuff that you're dealing with, what's preventing you from playing better or winning?

JERRY KELLY: There's just I'm used to in tournament mode just thinking of what I want to do and my muscles will actually cooperate, connect with my brain, let my autonomous system kind of take over and it comes out.

There's a bit of a disconnect there right now. That's what I have to fight through. I may have to talk it out more, I have to be clearer about what's going on because one thing comes into

my head and I forget about everything else that I really need to do. There's some things that I may need to change with my pre-shot to be crystal clear.

And I'm bouncing around all the time, I'm changing shots when I'm over the ball. That's why I'm so jumpy, because I'm reacting to everything, I'm not just being kind of a robot swinger. That's hurting me. I think it's hurting me because I don't have the strength, I can't save it as much.

It's just different, you know? If I can relax on myself a little bit more, I think that part will come back, but as anybody knows that gets any kind of a diagnosis, you go through a little bit of an anger phase and that's either going to make you fight or flight. It's going to make me fight. I've just got to find my way mentally through that kind of situation, not get down on myself and really get it done.

Q. Just to piggyback on what you said about everybody's going through something. This week there's two special kids that are going to be out here, one of whom you got to spend time with today, Titus, who Stricker will be with tomorrow. I've been out here a long time and I've seen how much those experiences with the players means to them. If I could just get a comment on how special it is for you guys to have an opportunity to get into the heads and minds of kids like that?

JERRY KELLY: Exactly. And I talked with him a little bit, he's acute myeloid leukemia I think it is. But that's a blood cancer and anytime you say the word "cancer," it sure makes rheumatoid arthritis seem like nothing.

And he fought his way through it, he's coming out on the good side of things. He's always got to pay attention, but getting him to really smack the ball out there, release the clubhead down the line, he was hammering some of them. And to see that glow come out of him when he hit so many good shots out there and drained the last putt too, which was great, yeah, it makes you take a step back and look at everything that you're going through. You know, it's amazing. I watched my wife and how positive she is for me when she's going through so much. Yeah, you've got to get your butt out of that "woe is me" attitude, just do what you need to do.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, Jerry, for the time.

JERRY KELLY: You got it.