

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**FRED COUPLES**



**Q. Fred, thanks for joining us for the third Galleri Classic. Just what's it mean to be back here, having the Champions Tour here playing this event at such an iconic course?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Yeah, we're very lucky. As everyone knows, the women had a long, long run here. I think this is the kind of course, if you look at it, you really have to hit a lot of shots.

I grew up -- I say grew up here, I lived in Palm Springs since 1980 and John Cook and I played here all the time so I know the course pretty well. You've got to be able to cut it, you've got to be able to draw it, you've got to be able to stop it. I've heard it's in absolutely perfect shape, which is not uncommon, but I really do like it.

Last year I withdrew because of my back and the year before I think I played OK. It's a great course for all of us. We're lucky to be here and I'm hoping we can continue. I don't know what I'm hearing, but I'm hoping we can continue to play here a few more years, or at least for me. I'm getting old.

**Q. Last year you did withdraw. This year, much better shape coming in here, playing well and actually on the leaderboard. Does that mean that you feel like this is a tournament that you're going to be able, despite the cold --**

**FRED COUPLES:** Well, I played well in Naples, I really did, I had a great last round to move up, and I played well last week.

Now, again, I'm a member at Newport so I kind of know the nooks and crannies which might save me a shot or two a round. On Sunday I birdie 2 and I bogey 3, a par 5, and I made the rest par. Was it ugly? It was kind of scrappy when you're watching Freddie Jacobson and Jimenez play. They both battled, it was fun to watch. I was never, I just couldn't make a birdie, I couldn't hit a shot close. When I did, I couldn't make a putt.

But I'm playing well and I'm trying to do a couple things in my game which I never really thought about. One of them would be I'm trying to swing physically as hard as I can with my driver. I said that last week, too. Because when I go to Augusta, I can't -- I've got to pick up six or eight or 10 yards. So I'm trying to do it now and if I feel OK when I'm done I'll come and hit 20 drivers, really swing hard. And I drove it well last week.

Now, again, I know that course and I know this one so that kind of helps when you feel like OK, you're on No. 2, I can miss it to the right so you just pound it. But when you play a course you don't really know, you kind of massage the ball around, so that's helping me



also.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**FRED COUPLES:** Yeah, no, but that I feel comfortable on. Last year I was a mess, I wasn't feeling very good at all but I played. So this year I'm hoping, knock on wood, that I get through this week well and I have a week of practice and then go to Augusta and feel good.

**Q. Obviously you withdrew from last year due to your back. I know it's been a year, but how do you feel? And you're a fan favorite here, I mean, what can fans expect here?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Well, they can expect some good shots. I can say this, I have a great pairing tomorrow with Leonard and Langer, and there's always good pairings here. But I honestly, I don't feel well, I'm fine with that, I can get it around. I didn't feel great Saturday and I felt the same Sunday and my scores were seven shots apart because of my game, not because of how I felt. But it's not much fun -- I feel very weak but my game's good.

I can't compare it to Ernie Els and some of these other guys that are winning a lot, Steven Alker, but I can compare it to my own game and I feel like my back's good and I'm hitting it solid. I just got to get it in the hole faster than I ever can. I need to shave a shot off every now and then and try and compete, and I did it last week and I look forward to playing well this week.

**Q. Fun question for you: Obviously alumni from Houston, big game against Purdue this week, Sweet 16. Will you be tuning into that game?**

**FRED COUPLES:** I've only seen Purdue -- oh, yeah, no, no, I'll be paying attention. If they're playing -- I don't know when they play. If they're playing when I'm out, I'll have my phone on tomorrow, or today. I don't know when we play. I know that's embarrassing, but I really have not felt well enough to pay much attention to anything. But I'm a Cougar. I've only seen Purdue play a little bit. We match up with a lot of teams because we have great defense, but I'm rooting for the Cougs, you better believe it.

