

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: WOODY AUSTIN
Friday, August 15, 2014



PHIL STAMBAUGH: 32-35, 67, I guess it really all did sort of happen for you on the front nine. Just talk about your first round here at the Dick's Sporting Goods Open after playing quite a bit on the PGA TOUR here at the B.C. Open.

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, I got off to a perfect start. I mean, I hit a perfect tee shot on the first hole and then I hit it to about 10 inches, so you can't get off to a better start than a putt you can make blindfolded and something that gets you going into the round.

Then I hit an awesome 5-wood into No. 3 and had probably only about eight feet for eagle or 10 feet for eagle and didn't make that, so I got off to a perfect start. I played the first three holes as well as I could play them and I was two-under after three so you kind of got into the round.

Then the thing I haven't done all year is I haven't been able to make a putt for par and I made a great putt for par on the fourth hole. I hit a bad shot on the green there, I made about a 15-footer for par. That right there was the key to my front nine because then I didn't -- then I played solid again. I birdied the next par 5 and then I made a great putt on the eighth hole, I made about a 20-footer on the eighth hole, maybe 25-footer, which again I haven't done all year. Then probably five, six feet on nine, yeah, and then unfortunately I woke up.

I missed at least six putts under 15 feet on the back. I missed about a 10-footer on 10, birdied 11 so I made that one, I missed about an eight-footer on 12, I missed a 12-footer on 13, missed a 15-footer on 14, missed a 12-footer on 15, missed a 12-footer on 17, and I think I had about 16 feet on the last hole and missed it. Just didn't make anything on the back nine.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: You did birdie 11. What did you do there?

WOODY AUSTIN: Yeah, I probably made, yeah, probably made a good 18-footer there probably.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: And at 17, what happened?

WOODY AUSTIN: I hit it in the right bunker, which is where you can't hit it. I started trying to hit it too close, I do that a lot. I got into my mode where I felt like I wasn't going to make another putt all day, so I felt like I had to knock the flag over. I do that, unfortunately I do that too often, and I just kind of hung onto the shot and hit it in the right bunker, which is where you couldn't hit it.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: But 67, respectable first start.

WOODY AUSTIN: Yeah, like I said, it was nice. I got off to such a good start, I was hoping that I would crack the egg that I've struggled all year playing a round of golf all year and I thought maybe today was going to be that. Like I said, I made two putts on the front I haven't made all year and I made the turn and I was hitting it good and I hit it good through 11. I'm like, all right, this is going to be my day, and I missed five putts in a row inside 14 feet. Next thing you know my mind goes back to, uh, oh, here we go, I need to knock it closer, and then I start to press those last couple holes to hit it really close and then I hit a couple bad shots.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Questions?

Q. How are the course conditions out there?

WOODY AUSTIN: Absolutely perfect.

Q. Especially was the wind a problem today?

WOODY AUSTIN: I mean the wind's a problem because you've got so much trees around here so it's going to swirl. We had a lot of changes. We thought No. 10 was into the wind and it ended up downwind and my tee shot got a lot closer to the green and a lot closer to the water so it made that shot a lot harder. So there was a lot of that going on. But as far as really being windy and making the course play difficult, no. It was just tricky. You had to watch yourself when the wind switched because it does switch a lot when there's that many trees out there.

Q. I'm curious, you've played the PGA TOUR all year (inaudible.) Do you go to a week like this, because your only previous Champions Tour event was a major, do you go into this week more relaxed, more confident because you're playing against older guys?

WOODY AUSTIN: Obviously you're more relaxed because it is, it is a different feeling. You're guaranteed that you're going to play, that's one thing. You're going to play Saturday, you're going to play Sunday, you're going to play every day. I am no longer the guy that's 40 yards behind everybody. I'm not hitting two to three clubs more into every green than more than half the field, so from that standpoint it's easier. I mean, I'm not trying to be disrespectful, that's just the gist of it.

I've now just played the golf course where I've hit more sand wedges today than I've hit all year long in one round because the golf course is not playing long and I'm used to playing, you know, out there where I'm hitting more 5-irons and 6-irons and whatever and today I'm hitting sand wedges and wedges and sand wedges and wedges. So it's got to be easier, it doesn't take a genius to figure that out. So from

that standpoint, yes, you look at it as it's easier.

But from the other standpoint you're like that's why a day like today, even though it was a good day, it's disappointing because I threw away a really good round because there's all those birdie opportunities. It's kind of a Catch 22, I guess.

Q. Leads to my next question, maybe not a question you can answer right now, but depending on how the rest of the season goes, what will your plans then be for next year?

WOODY AUSTIN: My plans haven't changed. I knew I wasn't going to make the FedEx so I knew that I would have these next seven weeks off or whatever as far as the regular tour goes, so I'm going to play a nice little schedule. I'm going to play these three in a row, probably take a couple weeks off, play Pebble, and then the new season starts back up. So I'm trying to keep myself prepared for the start of the new season.

I still feel like I have a game that can compete. The problem is that the only way I can compete out there is if I putt like Brad Faxon and I don't putt like Brad Faxon very often. So that's what the difficulty is for me out there. But I still feel as though on a certain week if I actually get that, I can still handle it out there. Until I don't feel as though I can do that, I'm going to still play out there.

Now, obviously if I don't play well enough next year, my exemption will be gone, I'll be out here full time after that. If I play as bad as I did this year at the start of next year, I'll pull the plug a lot quicker than I did last year. You know, I played all the way up to the FedEx this year. If I struggle that bad next year, I'll just realize that it's over and I'll come and enjoy my retirement.

Q. Woody, does it seem like yesterday that you won the PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year in 1995?

WOODY AUSTIN: It is hard to think that it's been 20 years, it really is. You know, the more amazing thing to me is how much the game has changed. I mean, the game has changed leaps and bounds now. I mean, I don't look at golf as golf anymore because it's not golf anymore. When you think in terms of the way I grew up and the way the game really came about, you know, the Bobby Joneses and the Nicklauses and whatever, that was golf. We don't play golf anymore. The technology has changed this game and it's made it a modern sport and so that is more amazing to me over the 20 years is how much the game has changed as opposed to me just being 20 years old.

Q. Is there an analogy to inventions like the car came, the TV, airplanes?

WOODY AUSTIN: That's all well and good but I think, you know, when you have a

sport like ours that was predicated on your talent level. It was not predicated on how big you were or how strong you were, it was predicated on how good you were because you had to hit a dime on a clubface with a golf ball that did not fly straight if you didn't hit that dime. So it didn't matter if you were six-five, it didn't matter if you were five-two, if you couldn't hit that dime, you weren't very good.

Well, now you can hit this gigantic big old thing that's this big anywhere on the clubface and the ball goes as far as you want it to go. Now, if you're not young, strong, big, you're at a disadvantage. I don't consider that a move in the right direction or I don't consider that progress. I consider that just taking a unique sport that we had and changing it into the modern era. They haven't done it in baseball, they haven't done it in basketball. Why would we do it? That's a disappointing part. Imagine if they made a baseball bat that didn't break or shatter? How big would the ballparks be? We've allowed that to happen to ours where we've taken away some of the greatest golf courses ever built and turned them into nothing because we've allowed technology to take them out of the game and that's sad from my perspective.

Q. When you look back on those 20 years, the highlights and challenges, what comes to your mind?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, obviously my rookie year was huge. Again, when you go back to that, I was never supposed to make it, I was never supposed to be here. I have no pedigree, I have no background in golf at all. My father was not a golfer. I was a sports junkie, I played everything growing up. I didn't even play golf until I was in high school and then I was self taught. I grew up on a public golf course with no driving range, no teacher, no nothing. I didn't go to a college that was known for golf. Then I got hurt right out of college and spent eight years working in a bank, so I was a 31 year old rookie. I had no business making it.

But again, back then it was based on your talent level. It was based on whether or not you could -- and I happened to have -- I happened to be blessed with some really good hand-eye coordination which you needed to have back then. You don't need to have it anymore but back then you had to have it. So from that standpoint my rookie year, the fact that I played that well that early was huge.

Then finally making the Ryder Cup team at 45 was pretty impressive, too. Those are my two big highlights. I felt pretty disappointed that I had never made a Presidents Cup team or a Ryder Cup team and the fact that I finally made one in '08 or '07, I felt like I should have made the Ryder Cup team in '08, so that was kind of -- I went from a high to a low. But those would be my two high points; the fact that I did make it, I was Rookie of the Year, and then I did at least make a Presidents Cup team.

Q. Just the last question, your off-course routine here, like what will you do tonight? What do you like about the area?

WOODY AUSTIN: I am pretty boring. I am not a food guy, I'm not a restaurant person because I'm a sports junkie. My ultimate is, depending on the year, like a little later in the year when the football's going or whatever, you'll find me at any kind of sports bar, I'll eat, I'll watch the game and then I'll be gone. I'm not a five-course meal guy, I'm not -- I'm a boring -- but I do love my casinos, so if I do find a casino, I'm usually around there. That's my one vice, I do have one vice and I love casinos. They don't like me. Actually, they love me because I build rooms on them, but that's me. I'm pretty boring off the golf course. I spend a lot of time just sitting in my room or I go to movies. You know, I tried to go to the baseball game the other day, tried to take BP but they said they were shutting that off. Like I said, anything sports wise I'll be around, I love that. I still love to be active as far as that stuff goes.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Anything else for wood I? Good luck tomorrow.

WOODY AUSTIN: Thanks very much.