

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: KEVIN SUTHERLAND
Saturday, August 16, 2014



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Okay, Kevin, historical day here on the Champions Tour. You become the first player ever to shoot 59 in Champions Tour history. A couple other things that you did, you tied our all-time record for best birdie-eagle streak and you tied our nine-hole record in relation to par, which is outstanding. Just a couple opening thoughts about starting the day and then I'm going to have to have you go through your entire round in detail if you can. A few opening thoughts first.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Yeah, amazing day. Who would have thought bogeying the last hole you would still feel great about it? Obviously I played incredibly well. I drove the ball very well.

But yesterday I got off to a really bad start, I was 3-over after four holes but on the back side I started hitting the ball pretty well, so I made a few putts late in the day and it kind of just - I felt like it kind of parlayed to today. I got off to an incredibly good start, I was 9-under after eight. That's beyond anything I could imagine. Then I played very solid on the back side. Yeah, it was just an amazing day.

The response I got from the players being all out there, I don't know how many there were, 10, 15, I don't know, that's pretty emotional for those guys to come out there for me. It just makes you feel really good. That's what this tour's all about though. I've been out here for three weeks and they welcome you with open arms and it's been a joy.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Okay. Take us through the whole round shot by shot if you could.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: One, I hit 3-wood off the tee and had roughly 75 yards, my 58 wedge to about 10 feet I'm guessing and made that.

Then I hit the tree on two, the tree in the fairway to the right. It kicked way to the right and so I hit it onto the green, just trying to get on the middle of the green from where I was and I did and a made about a 40, 45-footer, very long putt.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: What iron in?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I hit a 9-iron, then made an incredibly long putt.

I hit a good drive on three and I hit a 3-wood into the greenside bunker and I had a good lie in the bunker and I hit out to, you know, two feet, maybe less than that. That was basically a tap-in for birdie.

Then I go to four, the par 3, and hit a 9-iron. Not a very good one, to be honest with you. It was pin high, which made it look better than it really was, but it was a good 30 feet to the right but I made that putt. That's the common theme here, making putts.

Got to five, hit a good drive on five in the left side of the fairway and hit a hybrid to probably six or seven feet and made that for eagle. That's kind of when I started, you know, this could be a good day.

Then hit a good drive on six, hit a pitching wedge to about 15 feet and hit a really good putt there. The putt had some break in it but I made that putt.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: How long was that putt?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I'm guessing around 15. It may have been a little closer than that, but we'll call it 15.

This is where I got the biggest break of the day. I hit it in the left bunker on seven. Hit a 5-iron and it ended up on the downslope. It wasn't a very good spot and I was just trying to get it somewhere around the hole, just on the green, give yourself a chance. I really couldn't get it close without getting lucky by bouncing it through the rough.

It landed on the fringe and kind of rolled through there and it banged the pin and went in. I guess you need a margin of luck to shoot a score like 59 and that was my -- that's when I started going this is maybe just my day, you know.

But then I hit two really good shots on eight, a driver and a hybrid to the back edge. I was off the green but I putted it and I putted down to about two feet and made that for birdie.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: First putt was how far?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: 30 feet I'm guessing, but I was off the green, it was on the fringe when I putted it and made that putt for birdie.

Next hole I hit a good drive and didn't have a great lie in the fairway, I was in a hole or a divot. But it was not very far from the hole, it was maybe 70 yards. I hit a pretty okay wedge shot to about 15 feet and I missed it, so my first par of the day but I turned at 9-under, so I wasn't gripping.

No. 10, hit a hybrid and my 58 wedge, I call it my lob wedge, 58, and I made about a 10-footer there for birdie. I had like 85 yards to the hole.

No. 11, I hit a very good drive and had 8-iron to the green and I pulled it. It wasn't a very good shot, but it was pin high again but it was probably a good 45 feet from the hole and again I made that one. The length of putts I made today is pretty good.

12, I pulled my drive a little bit and it went in the bunker. It's a narrow tee shot. It wasn't a bad shot, just went in the bunker. Laid it up, pretty mediocre wedge shot to 25 feet, missed it. That was really the first time today that I really felt any sort of like disappointment. For me, if I hit a good drive there, I can get an iron to the green so that was the first par of the day. That was the only par of the day with any sort of disappointment.

At this point, I'm thinking, I'm doing the math here, I need to make two birdies coming in and I can shoot 59. So I hit a good drive and a 9-iron from 135 yards I'm guessing if I remember right and hit a good shot and I had a good look at it, 12-footer, maybe less, 10-footer and I missed it, didn't make it. I don't know if I pulled it or it just over broke to the left.

So then I go to the next hole, hit a 6-iron, hit a really good shot there but hit a little too much club and it bounced over into the first cut of rough. I actually putted it. The lie was pretty good and there wasn't a lot of rough I was going through so I putted it. I misread it and it was not a very good effort and it ended up being about pin high four feet to the right from 20 feet, so it wasn't my best effort but I made that putt for par. Those putts right there are big, that keeps the round going.

So I get to the next hole and it's an aggressive play but I hit driver. I was driving the ball really well, I knew I would get way down there, so I went ahead and hit driver and I drove it really well and it went way down there. I had my 54-degree sand wedge into the green and hit it to about 10 feet and it was a pretty easy putt uphill breaking to the right and I made that putt.

Right then I was thinking, okay, I need two. I knew on 16 I could probably knock it on the green if I hit a good drive, so I kind of felt like I needed one more.

On 16 I hit a really good tee shot, tried to hit a high cut, it was right in the middle of the green. It was a tough putt. I couldn't really read it very well, it could go left, it could go right, so it kind of went to the right so I had about a four-footer for my second putt on that hole.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: How far was your eagle putt?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Eagle putt was like 35 feet probably. But I got my birdie and so now I'm thinking, okay, two pars. But I hit a really good 6-iron on the next hole and I hit it to about a foot and that was nice, gave me a shot to play with. Obviously everybody wants to shoot 58 instead of 59, but I'll take 59.

The last hole, I've got to admit I was a little nervous at this point. I didn't hit a bad tee shot. The wind was a little bit out of the right and I was just trying to hit it down the right side and I kind of cut it a little bit and it hit the trees and kind of kicked it to the right. I hit an 8-iron from there. I had 110 to the front. I was just focused on the front edge of the green. I had 110 to the front and I hit it about four feet short of the green. It was a perfect shot, and I mean, I have to admit at this point I was a little nervous and I hit a poor putt. I hit it, gosh, a good seven feet past the hole from probably 40 feet maybe at the most. That was disappointing. I was hoping I could get up there close, give it a chance to go in.

But the next putt I actually felt like I hit a pretty good putt. When I hit it I felt like I hit a good putt. I don't know if I pulled it or if broke a little left, but when I hit it I really thought I made it. But it didn't go in, that's okay. I didn't want to leave myself very much for the next putt.

So 59, you know, I sit there and say you don't really think about it too much, you don't get many opportunities for it. I'm incredibly pleased and proud.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: I looked it up, just so you know, Kevin's low round on the PGA TOUR was 62, I believe, at the 2010 Canadian Open.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: It might be, I don't remember. I trust you. I know I shot a good round, I don't remember what the actual score was though.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. At what point during your round did you shift from what I need to do to get back into contention to start thinking, all right, I've got a shot at 59 or something really spectacular?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I don't know if I ever got into what I needed to get back into contention. Honestly, I don't even know where I stand in the tournament. I was just kind of doing my thing. I don't even remember, I couldn't tell you if Olin Browne was 7-under today for the day, I have no idea. It wasn't so much like I'm not going to look, it's just that I kind of had my own thing going. It gets to a certain point where you're thinking I want to shoot something in the 50s. It goes beyond just the tournament itself for me. Tomorrow maybe I'll kick back into that mode of it's a tournament and you want to try to win. I need to kick back into that mode because today was just in my own little world.

Q. I've got you at 185 feet worth of putts.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Okay. That seems like a lot.

Q. Any indication on the range, on the putting green, any indication at all that

something was brewing?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: No. My warmup today seemed like the warmup I had yesterday. It didn't seem any different. I will say I was surprised that I struggled so much yesterday, especially early, because I really felt like I was playing well but it was just one of those days I didn't play well yesterday. But I felt late in the round I kind of got things going a little bit, shot 3-under par on the back side, played better golf.

But my warmup today was no different than any other day. It just was, you know, obviously I think it helped to make a bunch of long putts early. I made a long putt on two and four and played one and three very well. It just kind of got me into this mode of making birdies and just kept making birdies. It's easier said than done, but it kind of did.

I drove the ball really well. This course is tight, but if you're driving the ball well you can get a lot of short clubs in your hand and that's kind of what I did today. I had a lot of short irons, wedges and stuff and the driver helped a lot.

Q. What's been your best all-time, I mean, out with the boys at home whatever, do you know?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: 61 I think is the lowest round I ever shot just with the boys.

Q. Golf course?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Sunnyside Country Club in Fresno actually. It was quite a long time ago, it was in the '80s I think, that's how long ago it was. I think that's my lowest score is 61 going into today.

Q. When you get to the last few holes on that back stretch, how much of it is just a mental game and how do you get out of your own head during those to just make sure you make good strikes on the ball and make good putts?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: You know, I think one thing, you're trying to get birdies to shoot 59, you have a tendency to just be aggressive and stuff. You kind of keep going and keep going and keep going. I kind of felt like when I got to 13, after 16 all of a sudden you kind of kick out of that mode a little bit. No, I didn't birdie 17 because I hit a really good shot in there. 18 wasn't -- I probably wasn't playing as aggressive as I was earlier in the round and as a result you make a bogey. But when you're constantly pushing yourself to make birdies, you have a tendency to be so steely focused that you're not really trying to protect anything. That's kind of what I was doing today, especially late in the round. During the round, just playing, but when you get to 9-under after eight, I started thinking at that point I need four more birdies, so you start getting yourself into that mode of doing that.

Now, I might have kicked in that mode a little too soon, I don't know. I'm not sure when you're supposed to, but I was just being aggressive early -- I mean late in the round and didn't really think much about anything else.

Q. As you look back on this round, what do you think is going to stand out the most to you about what happened today?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: You know, there's a lot of things. The response I got when I came up 18 and I was just short of the green, everybody in the crowd stood up and started applauding. I've got to admit, it gave me chills, it really did. It was quite a response. I guess if you're Jack Nicklaus or Arnold Palmer you get used to that. I haven't had that very often. So when they stood up, everybody stood up around the green and was clapping, I got some chills. I think that's what I'm going to remember most.

And the players behind the green giving me hugs and high fives and hand shakes and congratulations, that stuff means a lot. That's the stuff I'm going to remember most about today.

Obviously I'm going to remember playing very well and making a lot of putts. And the gallery was great out there. They just were so supportive and it just seemed as the round went on there was more and more people there and they seemed to get more and more excited and I was trying just not to let them down. There's almost that pressure of not letting them down because they want to see a 59 and I was trying not to let them down. I'm sure they would have loved a 58, too. But I always say one thing about this game is crazy, if you bogey the last hole for 59, you're still coming off the course going dang, let one get away.

Q. Did you see the Golf Channel special The 59 Club?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I didn't see it. I saw commercials for it but I never saw it. Paul Goydos is a very good friend of mine, we go back all the way to college and I know he was on it and stuff but I didn't actually see it. I missed the airing of it. Maybe I could have learned something from it, I don't know.

Q. Can you name who's in the club?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Annika Sorenstam, Paul Goydos, David Duval, Stuart Appleby. Is that it? Al Geiberger.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Chip Beck.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Chip Beck, yes, that's the one I'm forgetting.

Q. Was your interaction with Billy or his with you any different, did you notice

him clamming up a little bit, tensing up, acting any differently at all?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: No, I didn't notice anything from Billy at all. I didn't really notice anybody in my group really. I didn't really feel like I was getting the perfect game, no one wants to talk to you when you have a perfect game going like they do in baseball, I didn't really notice that. Billy was just being the way he was all day, and I was trying to do that too, you know, as far as trying just to do my thing, but I was obviously trying to make as many birdies as I could.

Q. Your putt on 16 there, the birdie putt, I think it wanted to kind of get away from there. Did your heart kind of skip a beat for a moment?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Yeah, I have to admit it did. It wasn't exactly the putt I was looking for. It was kind of quick, breaking to the right so I'm playing like left edge and it wasn't my best putt of the day. I'll be the first one to tell you I was nervous over that putt. I needed to make that putt. You don't want to have to go to the last two having to make a birdie. So it wasn't my best putt but it snuck in. Again, it was kind of one of those things it was kind of my day and those putts sometimes go in and that one did. It didn't have to, put it that way.

Q. Kevin, I know you said you've got to get back to tournament mentality tomorrow. How do you follow this up and what can we expect for an encore?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Well, I don't know. I'm going to try to just go back and do my own thing, just play good golf. I'm not going to go out there and say, let's see, yesterday I was 7-under after this hole, today I'm only two or whatever, I'm kind of falling behind. I'm not going to be doing that. You've got to get back in to just playing golf. But 59s are hard to follow up, there's no doubt, but I'm going to try not to take it as a whole new day.

Q. Your approach shot on 15, you used the backboard and you watched it for a long time. Did you think at any time it would come back to the water?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I didn't know. I was trying to hit it past the hole just because of that. I was a little concerned about it spinning back and that's one reason why I went with that club. It was more of a lob wedge number for me but I was worried about spinning back into the water, so I kind of hit my 54 but I was still a little concerned. I didn't know how much speed it had. You know, you're that far away, you can't tell.

I'll be honest with you, I don't have a lot of experience on this golf course, so I don't know how much you have to be worried about the ball spinning back in the water there.

Q. The cameraman on 17 tee after your shot there, seemed like a light

moment?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Yeah, he was having a conversation, he goes, "Just so you know, the ball's a foot from the hole." I go, "Really? I like a ball a foot from the hole."

Yeah, we just had a little conversation about it. He told me that the ball was very close because we can't see anything from back there. The reaction was great but sometimes it could be a reaction for a foot and 10 feet can be the same. So when he told me it was a foot, that was a nice feeling. And it was a foot.

Q. Will you pay a little more attention to the television coverage tonight than normal?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I don't know. I haven't given it that much thought. Probably a little bit, I guess. You know, I'm definitely going to be paying attention to my Oakland As a little bit, too. A little baseball watching on the computer. I'll probably turn it on to see what they say.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Anything else? Congratulations again, Kevin. Awesome.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Thank you, appreciate it.