

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: KENNY PERRY
Wednesday, May 13, 2015



Q. Just your thoughts about coming back to Shoal Creek and defending?

KENNY PERRY: Always exciting to come back to a place you had a little history and been able to win. It's always nice to be the defending champ, that never gets old. And this is one of my favorite golf courses, I just enjoy playing here. I like the south, and this is -- this golf course is set up, really set up well for me. You've got to be a great driver of the golf ball, good iron player. If I get my putter to wake up, I usually get things to happen for me.

Q. I don't know how this course -- I don't know if you played it yet this week?

KENNY PERRY: I played yesterday, I played a practice round yesterday.

Q. It seems like such a difference. Last year you were one stroke better than the year before and yet you went from 15th to a win. Is that just --

KENNY PERRY: Well, last year we played in some weather and rain. This year the golf course is playing a lot firmer and a lot faster, so that brings a lot more players into the mix, kind of takes away my advantage of being long off the tee, so I'm going to look for great scores this week. The golf course is in great shape, the greens are holding and they're putting beautifully. So, you know, we've got weather coming in the next four days, we've got chances of heavy rain and thunderstorms and stuff, and that may dictate the score. But if this would stay firm and fast, I think there's going to be some really good scores shot out here this week.

Q. Are your clubs okay, got here okay?

KENNY PERRY: Yeah, yeah, everything's good. Put a brand new set of irons in at Houston and that really helped me. I almost won the tournament, lost in a playoff to Woosnam, and they were fantastic. It's a brand new set of Callaway MB irons that I've always played a cast, kind of perimeter weighted club. Actually went back to the old school blade, stuff I used to use back in the early years on the PGA TOUR. Immediately I started hitting some really quality golf shots, shaping the ball right to left and left to right. Brought a smile to my face. I was kind of living in the past a little bit and reminiscing on shots, I was seeing shots like I used to hit and it made my heart happy.

Q. How long had it been since you've seen Ian play that way?

KENNY PERRY: He's not played much out here. Well, I haven't played with him yet. First time I got to see him swing at it was in the playoff, and he hit a beautiful shot and a beautiful hybrid right on the green and made a 35-footer, said give me the trophy. I'm happy for him. Here's a Masters winner, a guy that played great on the PGA TOUR and he didn't have

much status out here, so now at least for the next year he can play all for everything he wants to play in and go live out his dreams.

Q. Tell me a little bit just about how your season is going so far and what your goals are.

KENNY PERRY: I've been playing back and forth, I've been playing mostly on the PGA this year. I took my Top 25 all-time money and I hadn't had much success on the PGA this year, played very poorly. But a lot of that, I signed with Callaway this year, I'm getting used to the clubs, the ball. I mean, I changed 14 clubs and a ball starting this year, so I'm trying to dial all that stuff in and I'm starting to get a handle on it. Played beautifully at Houston, found a driver I love, got my wedges right now, got irons I like. So I put a putter, they wanted me to play the Odyssey putter, so I found a putter I really liked that week. It worked in Houston. I might not be saying that after this week but we'll see. So, you know, it's kind of been a learning process. You kind of see a lot of guys do that and try -- it takes them a little bit of time to figure it out and so I think it's going in the right direction now.

Q. You played -- I guess the final 12 rounds you were having some back pain and stuff and still played real well. Is that just something you have to deal with all the time?

KENNY PERRY: Well, no, I hadn't dealt with that in about 15 years. They took me down on the ground on the 6th hole, just bent over to pick my putter up. I've got bone spurs in my back and it hit a nerve and took me down, and thank goodness the next day I couldn't hardly walk. Went to the chiropractor all week and went and had an MRI which showed a couple herniated disks, which I knew I had in L4 and L45, but that really hadn't bothered me too much. It was up in the middle of my back where my problem is now, where I have the bone spurs. So you know, I dealt with it and was able to -- I knew if I stopped moving on Sunday at Houston I wasn't going to be able to play the playoff. I stood on the range there for an hour hitting balls just trying to keep my back loose and was able to go out in the playoff, but thank goodness Ian ended it early and I didn't have to suffer any more but after one hole.

Q. How is it now?

KENNY PERRY: It's good. I walked 18 yesterday, I had no problems, and was able to bend over and putt okay. That was where I was having most of my problem was just trying to bend over and putt. I could hit the ball fine, but it was the follow-through that really hurt me. Backswing and the impact was fine, it was just the follow-through killed me, and putting was killing me. It all felt great yesterday, so I'm ready to go.

Q. You said Shoal Creek's one of your favorite places to play. For locals coming out, what do they have to look forward to?

KENNY PERRY: Well, I like a golf course that's tree lined, it kind of tells you what to do. It's just beautiful. Just an old course and it just sets out there in front of you and says come get

me. There's a lot of risk-reward holes. Like No. 11 is a par 5 over water, you've got -- 8's a great par 3. That thing, I get nervous every time on 8 when I get up there. Kind of reminds me of the 17th at TPC because that front left and back left pin, there's trouble everywhere. You've got to hit a golf shot. This is a ball strikers golf course, you cannot get away hitting it poorly here. My short game's never been my strength, it's always been my ball striking that's allowed me to survive on the PGA TOUR for 30 years and now out here. So when I come to a place where 8- to 12-under wins a golf tournament, I like it. I don't like 20-something under winning. I don't like those putting birdie barrages. That's why I enjoy coming here.