

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: DUFFY WALDORF
Wednesday, November 4, 2015



MICHAEL BALIKER: Duffy Waldorf, welcome into the media center here at the Charles Schwab Cup Championship. Just start us off, winning the Toshiba Classic last week, coming into that week as the player on the bubble at number 30 on the Money List, talk about that whole experience and really putting yourself in position and being able to pull it off.

DUFFY WALDORF: Well, it had been kind of a long season but definitely a long last couple months because I felt like I was playing better probably in August and even July, August, September but I was like just staying right there at 31, 32, 33. Then I kind of think the last probably four or five tournaments I was 30, just staying right there. Of course that seems like that's all you think about. Seeing how the other guys are doing, it was just great to go to Toshiba, played a really nice first round but I had done that like the last couple weeks and then didn't have a good second round. To go out there, I think just making birdie on the first hole that second day just kind of relaxed me a little bit. Then once I got birdies on two and three, I was kind of off to the races and felt like I should just keep going. It was like my mind switched from worrying about my position at 30th to, oh, well let's just see how low we can shoot for 36 holes, and that obviously helped me in getting the championship.

Q. A couple seasons ago you were like in contention every week, almost won almost all the time, and then you dipped. What was the difference between then and earlier this year?

DUFFY WALDORF: I really had a great streak, 2013 I played great, into '14 where I finished second the first two weeks of the year and played pretty well probably just the first quarter. My knee started bothering me a bit last year in the middle of the year and pretty much bothered me through this year. It basically is a lot better since about August of this year. It's definitely a lot easier to get around the course and it's just one less thing I have to worry about. As we get older, a lot of things that we have to deal with and one less thing that I have to deal with, especially a physical ailment like that, and being an athletic performance, it was a problem but seems to have gotten better.

Q. Was there a treatment for it?

DUFFY WALDORF: I've been treating it the whole time, it just was a bit of a long-term repair. I vowed that there would be no surgery so there's going to be therapy instead and that's how I got better.

Q. Could you give us a sense for, I know you were born in L.A., you went to UCLA, but where did you grow up? Do you live now in Orange County? Was that win close to where you live?

DUFFY WALDORF: I'm pretty much an L.A. guy, I grew up in the San Fernando Valley. If you ever saw either The Karate Kid or heard the song by Frank Zappa's son I think, no Frank Zappa's daughter Moon Unit about valley girls, that's where I grew up, in Tarzana. It was a good environment, very competitive for sports and I was a football and a baseball player and a golfer. Went to UCLA and pretty much lived there. Then moved out to a place called Santa Clarita, Valencia, for many years and I'm back in Venice now, more in town. I have a place in Florida, too. So I split time between L.A. and Florida but I'm still kind of an L.A. guy because I spent most of my life there. After today, the weather's great in L.A. I don't know how they take it out here in Scottsdale.

Q. (No microphone.)

DUFFY WALDORF: Well, I'm not an Angel fan. If you want to go baseball, I'm a Cubs fan. My dad used to take me to the games at Dodger Stadium and we'd go to see the Padres and even the Giants, and we'd see some other games, too. But back when I was a youngster, my dad used to -- back in the day he would scalp tickets and sometimes we would sit behind the dugout and sometimes it'd be in the bleachers, sometimes on the first baseline. It was kind of fun, but I had a real interest in baseball but he's a Cubs fan so so am I.

Q. Were you a fullback and a first baseman, just guessing?

DUFFY WALDORF: That's a pretty good guess. I was a fullback and linebacker in football and then I played third base in baseball.

Q. What school?

DUFFY WALDORF: Taft High School. Yeah, good school. There's some real good football players that came from there; baseball players, too. There's a lot of good athletes there.

Q. What was your greatest moment in those two sports?

DUFFY WALDORF: In football and baseball?

Q. Yeah.

DUFFY WALDORF: In football, it's hard to say because I had a really great game against Birmingham, which was the second game of the year my senior year, and suddenly I was like on the radar screen. I started getting recruited and I was recruited by Harvard and Brown and Yale. Two games later I got injured, I sprained my ankle. I didn't play pretty much the rest of the season, and fortunately for me I didn't get accepted to the schools, didn't get the offers. So I turned my attention to golf, so that was a real highlight except kind of a low light but highlight because I decided that golf was probably the way for me to go.

Baseball, honestly probably when I was 12 years old our team -- we didn't have a really

good team but second half of the year I think I gave up about one hit in five games, I was 5-0 and I think I gave up -- I struck out two out of three. I remember every inning I would strike out two people and I would give up about one or two hits a game and I don't think I gave up a run for five games. I was a good pitcher when I was young.

Q. Did you gain over a hundred yards and a couple touchdowns in that one game that put you on the radar?

DUFFY WALDORF: No, it wasn't a great game. As far as numbers I probably had 80 yards, but I only had 10 carries because I was a fullback and I think I blocked well. If you want to have my tailback up here, I still see him a lot. He says, "I never had to work so hard for touchdowns with Duffy leading the way." That was back when we were running a lot of I-plays. So the combination of gaining a lot when I had the ball and then doing a lot without the ball.

Q. Did you have like 20 people at that party the other night?

DUFFY WALDORF: Yeah, about 20 people, a lot of friends. The interesting thing was nobody there had ever seen me -- been at a tournament when I've won, apparently because I've only won four tournaments on the regular tour, I guess. I guess that's not a positive thing. It's kind of like it makes me think of the bounce-back statistic. Well, you're great at bounce-back. Well, why am I making so many bogeys? It was great to have them there and a lot of them I hadn't seen in a while. Because that's kind of the L.A. tournament, the southern Cal tournament, I was able to get a lot of them down there including my son and my mom so it was great.

Q. I couldn't find your mom's name on Google.

DUFFY WALDORF: Sheila.

Q. What are the golf balls going to be this week?

DUFFY WALDORF: Second time I've been asked that question. My mom was in L.A. on Monday after the tournament and I found a dozen balls in my car and I said, "Here." I haven't even looked at them, they're sitting in my locker. I did see one ball left over from last week, it looked like part of the "breathe" sleeve because the ball said "smile" on it. It's a combination of breathing and smiling. Smiling's good, like breathing brings oxygen, smiling brings good endorphins. It's all part of a plan.

Q. Give us a sense of what it's like competing against Langer. He's going to be 58 years old, the guy just wears everybody out just because he's here every day, every week, every year. Just describe him in context with some of the other sports you've played maybe too.

DUFFY WALDORF: It's like playing -- see, the thing with golf is usually you think of golfers

as human because when you go out there, all of us go out there and like the course, sometimes you beat the course, a lot of times the course beats you up, and when you're competing it's other guys, you know, they seem to have the same issues but it's like playing that team you can't beat in high school or in college. Maybe it was Notre Dame when they were unbeatable. For us it was Banning in high school, the team from down south part of town.

Playing Langer, he's like -- he's not like a regular golfer. He's just always there, he's always in the hunt, he's always in contention and the amazing thing is that occasionally he has a tournament where he doesn't, you know, contend for a win. So it's like playing against a nonhuman person. It's like playing against Tiger in 2000. It's like playing against someone who's not playing the game the way you do. He takes it to a different level and he's able to maintain it and you just sit there in amazement and go, well, I know he's going to be around the lead. You know if you're beating him, usually you're in pretty good shape.