

**ROUND 2 INTERVIEW**  
**June 24, 2017**



**Mike Small (-6)**

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**MIKE SMALL:** That's unique for me and it's fun. I'm starting to get a rhythm going and I feel more comfortable over some shots.

**Q. What did you feel like you were doing out there today when you were making that move, you kind of got in the conversation, and then like we've seen a lot already this week, guys are getting to a point and then it's almost like you're hanging on?**

**MIKE SMALL:** I didn't hit it well the last six or seven holes. I made a lot of good putts, I putted well. Got it going early there, birdied those two on my second nine and then just didn't hit anything close the rest of the day. I made some good par putts. So I've got to sustain my golf swing and hit some better shots closer tomorrow if I'm going to hang with these guys, as low as they're shooting.

**Q. I know you didn't win the Club Pro, but did you get what you needed out of it to play well here and start that progression through the U.S. Senior Open?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Yeah, that's what we want to do, we just want to get better every day, you get more comfortable every day. This is a two-and-a-half-week stretch, I guess, with three significant tournaments for myself, so I want to build momentum. And then yeah, I thought the Club Pro, I would have liked to have won. I hit some good shots coming down the stretch, but some bad ones. Today they weren't as bad and tomorrow they'll be even a little bit better and that's the plan.

**Q. I thought you were going to get close enough and maybe get paired with Steve the last round, but he's not quite backing up and you missed a couple birdies down the stretch, right?**

**MIKE SMALL:** No, no. Yeah, that'd be awesome, that'd be fun. But we saw each other out there since I followed him the whole back nine. We talked briefly. I hope he just takes it low.

**Q. You're in the conversation at minus 6. Is this course conducive to getting back into it?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Yes, yes. You have to stay in the zone there, and I saw Doug today made six birdies in a row and that's what you've got to do out here. You can't sit there and make two or three in a row. Like I did today, I bogeyed 17, that kind of stopped me a little bit, and then I hit some bad shots. You've just got to keep firing at pins out here. These greens are so perfect, the guys will make a lot of putts. The wind's difficult, I think.

**Q. Today?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Yes.

**Q. Do you have a little home course advantage in a sense here? This isn't your first time out here, is it?**

**MIKE SMALL:** First time I played it. Yeah, the pro-am was. I coached here 10 to 12 years ago, but first time I ever played it. And I didn't get a practice round, I played that one pro-am because I flew in late, but I'm learning it. The greens are difficult to read, I think, once you get the hang of it because there's a lot of different breaks and subtle angles and stuff. But the greens are absolutely perfect. The course is in great shape. The best I remember. When I was here 10, 12 years ago, it was not near this good. This is awesome.

**Q. How good is it in comparison to what you have at UI?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Oh, this course is pure. You can't get a golf course in better shape than this one.

**Q. Is that Stone Creek, is that the one you mainly play on?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Yeah. When they host tournaments, they get it pretty good, too. But this, I mean, I played in a dozen majors and this is as good as those. This is in great shape.

**Q. Have you enjoyed watching Strick the last couple weeks?**

**MIKE SMALL:** Yeah, yeah. I didn't get a chance to watch The Open much because I was on the west coast. When I was playing was always when they were playing. But I've watched him for 30 years. We've been buddies and I'm his biggest fan and friend, and yeah, we just share in each other's successes.