

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: DAVID McKENZIE (-7)
August 25, 2017



DAVE SENKO: Well, David, great start, 7-under 65, including a nice finish there with a birdie on 7 and eagle on 8. Maybe just give us kind of a quick wrap on how your day went and then we'll get some questions.

DAVID McKENZIE: I was probably a little bit nervous teeing off, but overall I sort of struck the ball pretty well. First couple of holes was a little bit of a battle-fest the first few holes but sort of got into a bit of rhythm and made a few putts.

I think the first birdie I made on No. 12 from just off the back of the green sort of settled me down and I was able to get on a bit of a run from there.

DAVE SENKO: You had a bogey at 12, I guess.

DAVID McKENZIE: Yeah. I drove it into the fairway bunker on the left and was up against the lip and couldn't get it. I got it within 35 yards of the green and didn't get it up and down.

DAVE SENKO: And then you birdied three of the next four holes, No. 13, the par 3.

DAVID McKENZIE: Yep. Yeah, that was a nice birdie. Hit it over the back there. I didn't quite hit the shot that I wanted to. I hit it straight at the pin. I was trying to hit it right but I took that and knocked it in from I think it was about 10 paces past the hole there just on the fringe. That was a nice one to make.

DAVE SENKO: How far was the putt, how many feet?

DAVID McKENZIE: Ten paces, that's about 30 feet.

DAVE SENKO: And then 14, another birdie.

DAVID McKENZIE: What hole's 14 again?

Q. That's the canyon.

DAVID McKENZIE: Oh, the canyon, okay. I hit it down at the Canyon Club sign. You're aiming it down there. I think about 75 yards or something into the pin there and hit it in to about 10 feet, holed that one.

DAVE SENKO: And then 16.

DAVID McKENZIE: What is 16 again?

Q. It's the slightly uphill par 4.

DAVID McKENZIE: It was a 3-wood off the three there and then a gap wedge in. I had actually a really perfect yardage in there and I thought I hit a good shot and I got up there and it was about 18 feet, 15 feet short of the hole. I thought, what's going on here? But popped that one in the hole, which was another nice one to do.

That's basically how the day went. I sort of putted nicely, made most of the putts that I had a chance to make and didn't miss too many of them.

No. 18 was a nice par because I tried to drive it across the corner on the right edge of the fairway there. I thought I hit a good tee shot and picked my tee up, marched over to my bag and didn't think much about it. Then my caddie said, That went in the bunker. I was like, What? So in the end I didn't even get on the green for 3 and then hit a really good bunker shot there from about 24 yards away and holed one down the hill there for par from about 10 feet, so that was a nice par. That one there sort of relaxed me a little bit and I felt much more comfortable.

DAVE SENKO: How about 7 and 8 there?

DAVID McKENZIE: No. 7 I hit 2-iron off the tee and 8-iron in. I was pretty happy with my shot, probably about 12 feet away.

The greens seem to be not breaking. They don't break a long way, so if you can get a handle on not hitting them outside of the hole you can make some putts. So that one looked like it was really right-to-left, but it was just inside the hole so I made that one for about 12 feet.

DAVE SENKO: How about 8, shot sequence there?

DAVID McKENZIE: Do you want the story that you tell people how good it was for an eagle or how it was a bit lucky?

So what happened, I hit a really good tee shot. I hit a good tee shot there but got left and it got into the rough and it was on the side of the hill. So I was talking to my caddie and I think I had 197 yards to the pin. We were talking about it and I said, Well, just aim it right at the right bunker short of the green because anything that lands on the green, it's probably going to go in the bunker at the back anyway so I'll just aim it right. He's like, he was happy with that until I hit it really well but hooked it and it landed just on the green and ran up to about 18 feet and I holed that coming down the hill. So that was making the most of a bit of luck, I think.

DAVE SENKO: What did you hit for your second?

DAVID McKENZIE: 5-iron. It was probably a bit much club from where I was going, but I

was trying to hit it back and right so I could just chip it across the green.

Q. And take us through that again, why is that a lucky shot?

DAVID McKENZIE: Because I was aiming at 20 to 30 yards left of where I was aiming it on the green. I was aiming it to the right edge of the green or to miss the green and it actually went on the green to 18 feet, which I didn't think it was possible to land one on the green in that position and stay on the green. I thought it would just zip over and stay back in the bunker.

DAVE SENKO: Now, Tuesday you qualified in a playoff. How many players were in the playoff?

DAVID McKENZIE: One guy. Again, I feel fortunate even to get into the tournament. We were in a playoff and we both hit it beside each other. He went first, hit a really nice shot that was maybe 10 paces from the flag. I hit my second shot and hit a nice shot but it ran over the back of the green and chipped it up to -- I went first so I chipped it up to about six feet and he chipped it up to 12 and missed his putt and I rolled in my six-footer for birdie. So ultimately I felt a little bit fortunate that he didn't --

DAVE SENKO: Who was it?

DAVID McKENZIE: His name was Steve but I didn't get his second name.

At that point I was a little bit jet lagged because on Tuesday morning -- I only arrived Sunday afternoon from Fiji so when I got up at 5:30 or whatever it was in Seattle, it was 12:30 or 2:00 in the morning in Fiji. So I was a little bit dizzy and all over the place for that round. I sort of feel pretty fortunate that I --

DAVE SENKO: Were you there on vacation or playing?

DAVID McKENZIE: No, this is my job.

DAVE SENKO: In Fiji?

DAVID McKENZIE: Fiji, was playing the Fiji International, which is a European Tour, Asian Tour, Australian Tour event. It was a matter of interest to say I finished second in a tie so I had a nice week there, too.

Q. Warming up today, did you ever a feeling like, oh, I'm feeling good, or boy, I'm tired? I don't know, how were you feeling about the round?

DAVID McKENZIE: You know what, the last little bit I found that not much has bothered me in that if I feel good, I don't care. If I make a bogey, I don't care. So I haven't got mad or frustrated by anything. My caddie Evan was saying to me on 18, like the crowd was making

some noise and a car was going by. I said, Just let it go. I've been playing up in China and they don't care whether you're playing golf or not, they've got kids running across the fairway on a Sunday because that's their -- they're going out to their park to have fun. So the fact that people, if there's even spectators out here is a big thing. It's all good, you know what I mean? I don't have a problem with any of it, can't complain about anything.

DAVE SENKO: This year where have you been playing? I know you played in Wales at the Senior Open Championship.

DAVID McKENZIE: Yeah. I played the Australian Tour early in the year so I played maybe four or five events. I had a nice week early in February and finished fourth at the Victorian Open, which was an Australasian Tour event down on the Peninsula of Melbourne, the Balmain Peninsula, so that's a couple of nice links courses.

Then just a few pro-ams in Melbourne and Victoria. Then I got into the Volvo China Open through OneAsia, and then the following week was the GS Caltex Maekyung tournament, which was another OneAsia event in Seoul, Korea.

So I played those two, missed the cuts and then didn't play hardly at all until I decided that I was going to go to the Senior British Open. A friend of mine convinced me that I needed to go and he helped me to get there more than anything. So I played maybe four, five rounds of golf before coming over in the miserable winter in Melbourne and I've played pretty well since.

DAVE SENKO: Did you qualify at Wales?

DAVID McKENZIE: Yep, yep.

Q. So you played one PGA TOUR Champions event this year?

DAVID McKENZIE: Well, I only turned 50 on the 26th of July, so since I turned 50 I finished --

DAVE SENKO: You were T9 at Wales, right, in the Senior Open?

DAVID McKENZIE: So I turned 50 on the Wednesday before the tournament, so the day before it started I think I turned 50 that day. So I played well in Wales. Ultimately I felt like I was a bit disappointed because I had got to the lead and was doing very well on Friday, but then the wind blew me away in the afternoon. It got really strong.

Then I did really well, I got on a hot streak and birdied 5, 6 and eagled 7 or -- 6, 7 and 8. Birdied 7 and eagled 8. Had a hole-in-one at 8 at the Open so I was only a couple away from the lead and then didn't really finish as well as I would have liked after that sort of start. But you know what, I'm playing golf, it's all good at the moment.

Q. So this year you played on the Australian Tour?

DAVID McKENZIE: The Australasian Tour.

Q. The PGA TOUR Champions?

DAVE SENKO: And OneAsia Tour.

DAVID McKENZIE: And OneAsia, yeah. There's not many events there at the moment.

Q. Hopefully you'll be going to Calgary and then maybe you're coming back here?

DAVID McKENZIE: Yeah, but even there, that's more than I need to think about now. Basically what I'm going to think about is what I'm going to have for dinner, whether I'm going to have Pad Thai or whether I'm going to have Chipotle because I can't get that in Australia. So generally Chipotle gets a bit of a belting while I'm here. And then yeah, wait until I get my tee time, I guess, and work out what time I'm going to be playing tomorrow. I've entered the qualifying in Calgary but I haven't got any confirmation emails yet, so I'm a bit concerned I'm not in it or something. So I didn't have a chance this morning to check on it. I think entries are closed, so I've got my fingers crossed.

Q. You hope it's not necessary, right?

DAVID McKENZIE: Otherwise I'll be going the other way and going back to Australia.

Q. We can do you better than Chipotle, too, by the way.

DAVID McKENZIE: I love Chipotle. There's nowhere you can go and spend 10 bucks and get a margarita and a bowl of food that's massive and be happy as Larry.

Q. It's the American way, my friend.

DAVID McKENZIE: Exactly. It doesn't get any better than that, does it?