

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW: JERRY SMITH (-18)
August 27, 2017



DAVE SENKO: Well, Jerry, 68-66-64, you're 18 under, which was the old tournament record. Maybe just talk about your day, bogey-free, eight birdies.

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, I mean, it was just -- I got off to the kind of start I needed to and I felt pretty calm all day out there on the golf course. I could just sort of see early on, I forget what board I looked at early but I saw Gene Sauers was 6 under through nine and I saw somebody else 5 under through whatever. I don't know what it is this year but the scoring was just extremely low. I guess it's just a testament to how good this golf course is and the greens.

The ball was running a long ways, so I think it made the course play shorter than what I remember a couple years ago when the conditions maybe -- well, I don't know if they were so much different then but it just seemed to play shorter to me.

Yeah, having a bogey-free day is always great, only made two all week, so I felt great with that. I made some good long putts. I had really good speed all week. Made a couple long ones there to really kind of stay within distance of Jerry, and I guess I did get maybe the lead from him at one point.

You've got to commend him for birdieing 16 and 17. I know he missed a short one on 18. Would have felt better if he had made it, but I hit a poor putt there so I felt bad on that. I didn't hit a very good putt -- on the par 3 I hit a great shot in there is that 13 -- on 13 and missed that. So I would love to have those two back. I wouldn't change anything else. It's kind of been a little bit my trouble areas is some of the short putts at times. For the most part this week I did a great job, just happy about it.

Last week I got to play with Kevin Sutherland and Scott McCarron. I just watched the two of them do very similar to kind of what was going on today. I think that helped me a lot just to see what you have to do to contend and win out here. I really went out there with the mentality today that I was going to have to do something similar to that and something special to win. I think I gave it a great effort.

DAVE SENKO: Your birdies, just the back nine, No. 10.

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, 10 I hit a decent tee shot but I hit a pitching wedge in there maybe 10, 12 feet and hit a very good putt. I had a similar one the first day so I kind of knew what it was supposed to do so I made that.

Yeah, 11, the last two days I've been down in that kind of bowl on 11 with those two back pins and I made both those putts. They were very difficult putts, long putts. The one yesterday was longer than the one today, so that was a bonus. Really, then I thought, all

right, I feel like I've got a chance here.

Q. How far was the putt today?

JERRY SMITH: Well, today was at least 40 feet and I'll bet yesterday was every bit of 50 feet. I mean, they were two very long putts, two that you would just like to two-putt most any given day.

Didn't hit a very good approach. I hit a good drive on 12 and didn't hit a very good approach there. I know Jerry made birdie. He came back and made birdie on me there.

Like I said, 13 I felt like was a little bit of a disappointment, but I came back on 14 and didn't hit a great L wedge there, sand wedge, but I made again at least 20 feet on 14 and that was a great putt. All three of us made good putts there for birdie.

So 15 I hit a good drive, it ran a long ways down there, I only hit a 4-hybrid in. I don't remember what my distance was but got it to kind of the front edge, made a good two-putt there. That was -- I don't even know how long that was. That was probably 70, 80 feet maybe. But again, my speed was just so good all week on any length of putt.

And the last three, we got put on the clock, which I thought was a little bit out of -- you know, I didn't like that necessarily. I don't think any of us did, but made us speed up maybe a little bit. I don't think it played a big factor in the final outcome, but you don't like getting put on the clock with three holes to play. It would be nice to get a warning first rather than just say you're on the clock.

I made a good two-putt on 17 and Jerry hit a great shot in there. It was probably 15 feet maybe, but he poured it in there like you've got to do. Scott McCarron did a very similar thing last week on 17, which is a par 3, and then birdied 18 obviously. Yeah, I mean my putt on 18 wasn't a very good effort.

DAVE SENKO: How far was it?

JERRY SMITH: Oh, it wasn't more than eight, 10 feet at most to kind of leave it short. Just kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth. You think Jerry's going to make it. You'd like to make him make it, but he ended up missing it. So yeah, just great to be there again. I didn't like the way last Sunday felt, so to come out and play very strongly today feels a lot better, for sure.

DAVE SENKO: What was on 13, that par 3 you said you missed a putt there, how long was that putt?

JERRY SMITH: Jerry was just inside me for par, so it really felt like that could be a real big turning point there, it could have been a two-shot swing. I missed and he made. Mine was probably I would say eight feet and his was probably six feet. It was one you just -- at that

point I just felt like I would make it and I stepped away and I never -- I don't like stepping away really, but you heard the hushes kind of in the crowd and I stepped away and just didn't hit a very good putt.

Q. This must give you a lot of confidence going forward?

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, well, I do. The last two weeks have been encouraging, and I've played pretty well honestly all year. I've only had one really poor event I would say, which was the British Seniors, which was just awful weather so I tried to just not think about that too much.

I've been working on some things, not really anything different with my golf swing but just sort of the process and the routine and trying to step up over shots and the ball and just trust it and let it go more or less. I mean, it sounds sort of simple, but I'm just really trying to free it up and trust what I'm doing.

I've been driving the ball the last few weeks very well. Didn't on Sunday in Binghamton, but that's just what it takes out here. You've got to drive the ball very well.

I feel like my short game and my wedge play's pretty strong out here, but then it just comes down to that flat stick, that putter. I did change a couple weeks ago, went away from kind of a bigger, thicker grip to just a regular conventional grip and I really felt like that's helped me with my feel a little bit. I felt like the other way the feel was maybe getting taken away from what I was doing. So I like that, that's been good.

So yeah, I mean, my goal all year has been to win again. I won two years ago and that's just what you need out here, just makes this tour all the more fun and enjoyable, especially for a guy like myself. I think all of us, that's just what you've got to be out here playing for and striving for. I've been in the last group three times this year. The first two didn't go very well, so today was definitely something I could build on and play off of. So I like the end of the year. I had a pretty good finish the last year, I like a lot of venues and the courses we play.

Q. It had to be a lot of fun, right?

JERRY SMITH: It was. Well, I think what was really nice for me, I mean not that I've played with a lot of the top guys out here on this stage a lot on my career, but to have Jerry Kelly, who I consider a friend of mine out here, and Billy Mayfair, who I know, that was a comfortable group, I felt. I approached it that way. I had fun out there. I really not cheerlead but I commended the guys for good shots and making putts. Jerry, when he had to, needed to.

So last week, which was McCarron and Sutherland, I know those guys well enough but it just didn't feel as enjoyable to me, I guess. They were playing great and you'd like to feed off of that, but I just felt a little out of sorts. You know, for me, I like having good pairings,

ones I'm comfortable with. I love getting the chance to play with all the top players as well, the Langers, Montgomeries, whoever they are. I was glad to get in the last group yesterday. I knew my situation and made birdie on 18, I think that that helped. I don't mind being in the last group, that's where you want to be. Most times that's where the winner comes from. But I did, I liked the pairing today and I think it made things easier, easier for me in some ways.

DAVE SENKO: Thanks, Jerry.

JERRY SMITH: Thanks, guys. Appreciate it.