

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
November 10, 2017

PAUL GOYDOS (-7)



Q. Well, good start for you, 7-under 64 today?

PAUL GOYDOS: Yeah, I got off to a good start. I had actually a little rules question on 8, par 3. I hit it on the green and I putted down to have, I don't know, an eight-inch putt for par and marked it. Then Billy putted and when he finished, I re-marked and went in to putt it and my putter accidentally touched the ball and the ball moved. That's a penalty, I thought.

So we called an official and he said, yeah, it's a one-stroke penalty for the back. I said, okay, I screwed up. Put it back, I tap in.

Then they come in and tell me no, that's a local rule. That since the Dustin Johnson situation, you play the local rule and if you accidentally cause the ball to move with the putter, even if you touch it with your putter, it's not a penalty. I have to put it back, which I did, so it was a 3. Then from that point on good things kind of happened. I kind of butchered 10 and made a good par, and then I played pretty good coming in. Nice birdies on 12, 13 and 14 and 16, kind of butchered 17, made a nice par and then a nice birdie on 18.

Q. That's a weird deal where you almost feel like the wind is --

PAUL GOYDOS: I mean, again, it seems like Billy and I discussed it a little bit, my playing partner. Seems like it's 180 degrees. Obviously the Dustin Johnson issue at Oakmont was ridiculous. He obviously didn't have any intention of the ball moving, he didn't do anything to make the ball move. The greens were 14 on the stimpmeter and there's a little imperfection on the green. The ball moves, he didn't do anything. I can see where you wouldn't want to penalize somebody.

But it does seem like they would go -- if they went along way, if you took a practice swing and move your ball, there's no penalty, but if you're in the fairway, there is a penalty. It seems, yeah, the ball's not in play yet. But on the fairway, if I had done the same thing on the fairway, I would have been penalized. So you might want to talk to the rules official about the clarification there, but we asked a couple of times.

Q. Sounded like you're trying to give the stroke back?

PAUL GOYDOS: Well, it's different. That's one thing on the Champions Tour, if you've been competing under the same rules under 30-odd years, when they change something that drastically, it takes some getting used to. I understand -- I mean, I think that's -- but the argument that I shouldn't be penalized is that that's stupid. The guy has an eight-inch putt

and I'm not taking advantage or doing anything like that. There's no intention. It's just one of those things that happened cleaning up on the hole. It's just -- we're just so used to the rules being very cut and dried. We played by the same rules for forever and now that we have high-definition television and high-speed cameras, it just kind of changed what -- I said this a million times, if you take it to the microscopic level, you're never going to -- the ball's moving all the time. The ball's not touching the ground, either. You're not touching the ground. Like on this floor, you're not.

So I think the technology has caused the USGA to change the rules a little bit to make it a little bit more manageable.

Q. Of course people outside the sport would say that common sense is -- anything that is ruling in favor of common sense is a good thing?

PAUL GOYDOS: Yes, I agree with that. But I don't think I have a problem with it as much as it's just different and something that we're not used to having. Again, for the first 52 years of my life that would have been a penalty and it's not a penalty in my 53rd year of my life. I'm not saying it wasn't wrong for 52 years, but it is a change.

Q. So scores will be in the 20s this weekend?

PAUL GOYDOS: There's an absence of weather, which is not helping the scoring. The golf course is in perfect shape. It's just, you know, you want the scores to be higher, have lousy greens and bad fairways and the scores will be plenty high enough.

The scores are going to be good. I don't think 20 under's going to win, but I think it's going to be a pretty low score unless something funny happens with the weather. The pins seemed pretty good today, but there's plenty of corners in these greens. We'll see how it works out. I'm not worried about it. I'll just go out and play and see what happens.

Q. I know it's early, but it would be pretty cool to have back-to-back Virginia Country Club winners?

PAUL GOYDOS: (Inaudible.) It was a little bit of a pillow fight, but that hole was playing hard. Again, in golf there are -- we just gave Gene Sauers -- the Patrick Cantlay story, I mean, the question I have is how many people could have taken four years off between the age of 21 and 25 and played basically virtually zero tournament golf because you're -- you know, you don't know what's wrong but there's something wrong with your back, and then play only -- you're able to play 12 events and make the TOUR Championship.

Q. And go through the emotionally wrenching tragedy he went through. That alone --

PAUL GOYDOS: Amazing. So here's a guy -- and then he plays the 14th -- the 13th event in China, 14th event he wins. But you think back of guys who could do that. Tiger could do that, it wouldn't be a big stretch. Nicklaus could do that, that's not a big stretch. Then you

start -- then Hogan got hit by a bus and won three majors, so he probably could handle adversity.

But after that you start -- you're running out of names pretty fast there. You start looking at -- I mean, the fact he didn't win kind of hurt the story a little bit, but that's an unbelievable -- I mean, I played with him three weeks ago. He is so much better than I ever was, it's scary. I think he's another guy -- he's a forgotten 20-year old.

Q. Don't forget he was No. 1 for a year when Jordan -- like he was that much better than Jordan?

PAUL GOYDOS: Well, he had better results than Jordan. I mean, he's just another cog for Furyk's Ryder Cup team in my opinion. That team's going to be a bunch of 20-year olds who all seem to get along. I mean, the Tiger effect is in full force right now on the PGA TOUR and it's pretty exciting.

Q. The thing about Patrick is he doesn't seem -- his emotions are so even?

PAUL GOYDOS: They work hard on that. He is very -- he has the ability to just kind of accept what happens and move forward. He didn't -- you know, and I think he might have bogeyed a couple holes coming in and he ended up in playoff. He didn't hit a very good bunker shot in the playoff, but just kind of kept grinding through the hole, kept grinding through the deal and made a nice putt to stay alive in the playoff, and then I think won it on the next go-through.

That's -- you know, again, that's a skill that they practice and Jamie preaches. He preaches all of his players, you watch John Merrick play, it was very similar at times. John Mallinger, the guys who are -- again, Jamie's a good friend so maybe I'm thinking too much of this.

How many teaching -- there's no question Butch Harmon's probably the best pro whisperer out there. Everybody he touches turns to gold, I get that. But Jamie's taken two basically high school kids or younger and turned them into Tour winners, Merrick and Cantlay, and Mallinger had a nice career, too.

Q. Luke List?

PAUL GOYDOS: Luke List is working with him. He's already a Tour player, so I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about taking a raw piece of talent that obviously can play a little bit and then molding them into a winner. If Jamie isn't the most underrated teacher on the face of the earth because he never makes those top 100 lists. I told him, if you're not going to put Mulligan on the list, then the list is irrelevant.

Q. Why do you think that's so?

PAUL GOYDOS: I think part is that Jamie doesn't promote himself as a teacher. He's not a

teaching pro, he's a CEO of a country club. And Jamie's not a self promoter. That's our job. I'm the one, I try to promote Jamie as much as I can. I think the guy's -- I think he can help anybody. I think, again, a good player, a Tour player, I think he can help them all. But this concept of taking again a raw 13- or 14-year-old kid, start working with him. He's got some other kids right now he's working with, by the way, too. And then have two of those kids in a pretty short period of time win on the PGA TOUR has got to be impressive. Got to be.

Q. Cantlay's going to take off, too.

PAUL GOYDOS: He's going to stick to his schedule, he's going to play his 15 or 20 events, you know. He goes through a lot to play. It's a three- or four-hour warmup for him, so he has a 7:00 tee time, he's got to get there at 4:00 in the morning to get ready, so that takes a lot out of you.

But I don't see -- I don't see -- I just don't see a limit. He hits it far enough, he's a great putter. Like you said, I think mentally, he's obviously incredibly strong mentally. Again, I couldn't imagine taking four years off and making a cut the first six months on the PGA TOUR let alone making the TOUR Championship because it's just not that easy. It's just -- scores are too good, players are too good. I mean, to me, I remember I was kind of like okay, he's back playing, hopefully he can kind of get his feet wet and maybe get in the top 200 and get to Tour school and do that thing and get his card. Then the second event he plays he loses in playoff. What? And then he finishes third. I went, I just played with this kid, what the hell?

Q. (Inaudible)

PAUL GOYDOS: And he's only going to go up.

Q. And you look at people who take time off, it seems like just getting yourself back in the competitive mode?

PAUL GOYDOS: Right. After this week we're going to have two months off. I remember, I get to Hawaii, I'm on the range trying to find some confidence, and this guy took four years off. I'm still flabbergasted by that. I still have to see him in the club so I really can't say it to him.

Q. Do you have his number?

PAUL GOYDOS: I don't have his number. I texted Jamie.

Q. You don't have his phone number?

PAUL GOYDOS: He doesn't need me bugging him. He's got plenty going on.

Q. Are you surprised that Tiger is coming back?

PAUL GOYDOS: No, that's what we do. What else is he going to do? We play golf for a living.

Q. What does he need to do?

PAUL GOYDOS: He's not trying -- that's what he does for a living. What else -- this is what we do. I mean, I couldn't imagine -- I'm 53 and I'm going to hope to play for as long as I can. I mean, there are obviously difficult moments when you're struggling, but this is what Tiger does.

I think Tiger might deep down kind of say -- you know, I think we've forgotten how good Tiger was. We've obviously forgotten how good Nicklaus was and we've forgotten how good Tiger was and that kind of bothers him a little bit. He is still, you know, got to be the strongest competitor out there. No one's going to unseat his ability to do what he did on the golf course, what he can do mentally and how he can grind through stuff. He was the best at that. That doesn't go away with a back injury. But I think he's going to be -- I think if he can be healthy, I do think he's mentally strong enough to be competitive.

And again, all you hear is these kids today won't be afraid of him. That may very well be true, but you know what, they haven't seen it, either. I've seen it. I've seen it, and when I saw it, it was intimidating. If they saw what I saw, they wouldn't be saying that. I'm telling you right now. I played with him right before the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach and every single one of those guys would have said, "I can't beat him," because I knew that no one could beat him at that point in time.

And so yes, we've forgotten a little bit, we don't get to see it right now, but I've seen Tiger at his best and those guys have not.

Q. I think you've got something there because the young, like that 25 and under, they don't seem to really appreciate it?

PAUL GOYDOS: Put it this way: Patrick Reed would not be wearing a red shirt if Tiger were healthy because he wouldn't win a tournament. Tiger was that intimidating, he was tough. He was a tough competitor.

I remember I played with him one time, it was the Buick Open and we were in 20th place or whatever and I had a four-footer for par and he had already putted out. I look up toward the hole and somebody took Tiger's picture. They weren't taking my picture. The flash went off in my eyes and I kind of stepped back and I was kind of blinking and I kind of look at Tiger and he's just kind of looking at me going, Let's go, I deal with that all day. You know, hey, you're not getting any sympathy from me, pal.

He was a great competitor. He was the best competitor in my era. Obviously Jack Nicklaus was, too. Those kids, we've forgotten that and I think that's unfortunate. If nothing else, I

hope Tiger comes back and plays really well just so everybody can remember because it won't take long. Wow, was he good.

Q. Did you make that putt?

PAUL GOYDOS: I did end up making the putt, but I did take my time. I was proud of myself.