

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
November 10, 2017



JERRY SMITH (-6)

Q. Well, good way to start, playing at home and getting off to a 6-under start. You've got to be very happy with that.

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, I am. I hit it very well today and wasn't too stressed out there as far as saving pars here and there. You know, drove it well, which you've got to do out here. Hit a lot of greens. I'm guessing I probably hit 16, 17 greens and just made it as easy as I could for myself, so it was definitely a great start.

Q. With you living here, how much of a chance have you had to play here before this event?

JERRY SMITH: Not a lot. I probably played here four or five times before this tournament. I came down Saturday and played a round, I played a few holes on Sunday, and then came out on Tuesday. I played a few rounds before the tournament started.

Q. Two years ago you played at TPC Scottsdale for the qualifying school even though you already had status. Is that --

JERRY SMITH: Not really, no. I mean, when I came out here, I really had nothing. I did the school when I was 49 before turning 50 and didn't get through that year. Then I chose to go over to Europe and play their tour, which I had to go through their qualifying school, and then went back through the school the next year, which was down in Florida, and got through at that point. But no, I really had no status.

Q. So from that situation to now, in what is a relatively short span, how do you explain --

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, how do I put a finger on that? You know, I don't. I'm not sure, to be honest. I've had a pretty storybook tale out here, I would say, so far. Getting my card, coming out the first year winning, so kind of securing full status, and then playing literally almost everything the last two years. I didn't get into the Legends this year, it was the only event.

So I feel like just the more I play out here, I feel like I get a little more comfortable. And health-wise, you know, I'm in good health, I think. I just think I enjoy it a lot more than maybe my years on the regular tour, even though that was a great time as well. I can't put a real good finger on it. It's just -- I just enjoy it out here and just like it. Like I said, the guys have been great, very receptive to me out here. It's just been enjoyable being out here.

Q. You've played on so many different tours.

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, I played all over. I played Asia for many years, South America, and like I said, European Senior, the Web.com, Nationwide, whatever you call it.

Yeah, it's not like I haven't been around the game most of my career, and taking a few breaks here and there, which I think has probably kept my sanity a little bit and helped with my family. So I feel very blessed with how things are going at the moment.

Q. A little bigger than the Waterloo Open, isn't it?

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, yeah, true.

Q. (Inaudible.)

JERRY SMITH: I feel more support. There's definitely more people in the crowd than in other events, and I like that. It feels good, especially when you're playing well. I think it keeps you really going and focused and so forth. I didn't feel any pressure or anything, I just really felt very lucky in some ways to be here. Looked like at Thousand Oaks a couple weeks ago that I wasn't going to make it, so just trying to take advantage of the opportunity and would love to just have a couple more rounds like that and see what happens.

Q. What was your big takeaway from the European Seniors experience? I mean, that's really taking yourself outside your comfort zone at a time when you don't really need to?

JERRY SMITH: Well, I played overseas a lot already. I hadn't really been in Europe much, which I thoroughly enjoyed the travel over there. The travel aspect wasn't something that concerned me so much.

I think the thing that really helped me was that it gave me a place to play and I got to play probably 12 to 14 events that first year and it really, I think, got myself back into that playing mentality. I'm sure it helped me going back through the school the second time. I think that's the best thing that I took from it is just being back and being competitive again.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your background as a club pro and your family connections to the sport?

JERRY SMITH: Well, I have a history of superintendents in my family. My father was and grandfather and his father. That's the big golf --

Q. They were all superintendents?

JERRY SMITH: All superintendents.

Q. What were their names?

JERRY SMITH: Well, my father's name was Ted, and then Ted, Sr., and I think my grandfather was William, so they're all basically Teds.

My older brother was a club pro for many years and I worked for him. I learned a lot from him as far as the business is concerned. It just gave me a place to -- kind of coming out of college, you know, I actually played for a couple years out of college and then I went to work for him. So it gave me a place to kind of get grounded again and see the business, which I thought about going that route as well. When the time came, I just thought I should give playing another chance.

Q. That's in Iowa?

JERRY SMITH: In Oskaloosa, Iowa. Edmundson Golf Course. My family's still there. My brother's still managing that golf course and he's built another nine in town.

I enjoyed it. Just gave me a better perspective of the game and teaching and being in the shop. Even though I had been around it my whole life, but then when you actually have to do it, you know, I guess I learned that going through it that I still had the aspiration of playing, still wanted to play. So I'm happy that it all worked out, but I would have been happy going either direction really.

Q. Your father was a superintendent for 35 years?

JERRY SMITH: He was, yeah.

Q. At one course?

JERRY SMITH: At Edmundson.

Q. In Oskaloosa?

JERRY SMITH: Yeah.

Q. So growing up, are you picking balls up on the range?

JERRY SMITH: We didn't have a range, so didn't have to do that. There is a range there now, but back in the day we had to go out to one of the holes and hit and shag them ourselves. That's how we all practiced when we were -- we played a lot. Honestly, the golf, our house was attached to the clubhouse right there. We played a lot. When we got older, obviously we started practicing and hitting more balls, so yeah, yeah.

Q. I think a lot of people would say that's the way to learn the game is to play rather than just pound balls?

JERRY SMITH: I would agree. I would tend to agree, yes.

Q. How are you as a teacher?

JERRY SMITH: Oh, I don't know. I mean, I'm playing and I'm not teaching anymore, so I'm glad I'm doing this, to be honest. It's just long hours and it's tough. Teaching's a different -- I think people who are good teachers, it's a gift to do what they do and help players become better.

Q. Your father had long hours, too, didn't he, as a supe?

JERRY SMITH: Long hours. We had winters off, which is good. I think that was his therapy time. He used to hunt a lot and fish, so I think he was glad when the season was over.

Q. Where is Oskaloosa, where is that in Iowa?

JERRY SMITH: It's about an hour southeast of Des Moines.

Q. Was there another course that he worked at as a club pro?

JERRY SMITH: No, that was the one I worked at.

Q. I saw Wyoming as well?

JERRY SMITH: Well, I did go up there for a season, Casper, Wyoming. That was before I went to Europe, the year before I went to Europe. Yeah, that was -- you know, that was just a shot in the dark.

Q. What do you mean?

JERRY SMITH: Just what I was going to do. Like I said, I didn't have the status and I went up there maybe with the idea of going back that direction. I had an opportunity. And then when I came back home, I went through the school. Like I said, if Europe hadn't worked out, I probably would have gone back up there for another season. So Three Crowns Golf Course was what it was called.

Q. Is your father still around?

JERRY SMITH: Yeah. He's 80 now and still in good health, still playing golf a couple days a week.

Q. And your brother, Jeff?

JERRY SMITH: Brother's still there.

Q. He's running the course?

JERRY SMITH: Yep, still there. And my younger brother for a long time was his superintendent. My youngest brother, Mike, was his superintendent for a long time until a couple years ago, yeah.

Q. Cool story.

JERRY SMITH: Yeah, yeah, it is.