

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
June 23, 2019



JERRY KELLY (-15, won third playoff hole with birdie)

CHRIS RICHARDS: Jerry, congratulations on being the 2019 American Family Insurance Championship winner. Can you put into words how this feels?

JERRY KELLY: No, it really is truly awesome. I will thank all of you guys as well; Rob, Jay, Gary, everybody. I mean, you guys have been with me through thick and thin. So those GMO days, that first playoff was tough, and never getting it done, so this was really big for me. You guys know what it's about. It's about friends and family, and to be able to do it in front of everybody, closest I ever came was Chicago, but this is pretty sweet.

CHRIS RICHARDS: How tough was today? The back nine there's a lot of ups and downs, you thought you won it, you thought you didn't win it, so on and so forth. Then you went to a playoff. How tough is it to deal with those different emotions?

JERRY KELLY: I never thought I won it. I knew I was a couple holes ahead with a one-shot lead. Those guys -- Goosen, Strick -- hit it so much farther than I do. They can eagle 17 very easily, then they've got short irons into 18 where I've got 215 in.

You know, it was a tough second shot on 18, it was blowing pretty good at that time. I had, what, 209. I had to hit my 215 club hard, and I hit it hard and low with a draw and it still barely got to the green. Then I was just up against the first cut and didn't hit the putt. When you're picking it up a little bit because of that, you don't give it as much energy, so I left it short.

Then I hit a great second putt. And it's one of those things, if I wouldn't have hit that putt the way I did, I probably wouldn't have made the putt that I made in the playoff.

I'm thankful I got that second chance when you're the one who kind of fails to let guys into it. I know they missed putts on the last hole, too, but that would have been to tie it. It would have been a little different scenario.

Then you feel like you've got that second life. I didn't feel like I needed to go to the range because I felt like I was still pretty jacked up from watching everything that was going on. Yeah, it was kind of surreal. It was fun.

Q. What was your thought process on the third playoff hole when you saw Goosen, apparently that ball hit the green, rolled off into the collection area, and you had, what, maybe 25, 30 yards into the hole?

JERRY KELLY: I had 45 and I knew he was in a tough spot. I really thought he was going

to fly it on the green. I mean, Woody Austin knocked it past the pin on the green and Goosen's probably the longest out here.

You know, he hit a great shot up there. It rolled back into an unfortunate spot. Probably couldn't chip it because of that hay right behind it. I knew that was a tough up-and-down from where he was. So I knew if I could just get myself within 10 feet and make a putt, that might be it right there, and it turned out to be.

Q. Can you describe how close you were to leaving this place when you had missed that putt? It seemed like you were ready to get the heck out of town.

JERRY KELLY: Well, I knew I was coming here to talk to you guys. I wasn't going to leave, but I came here and I sat down. I was sitting right here when Goosen missed, so I figured I better come back and sit down right here when Strick was putting just in case I had to talk with you guys again. Even though you guys were all out there watching, I was sitting right here waiting for you like a good child would. I was here for you. I wasn't going to walk out, but it was going to be probably pretty short, I'm guessing.

Q. Jerry, on the winning putt, the last two couple rolls, what's going through your mind?

JERRY KELLY: You know, I kind of had to ask Eric, I didn't see it go in. I knew it was -- it looked like it was going well inside the edge and going in, and I turned and yelled, and then he hugged me really hard so I figured it must have gone in. But, I mean, I guarantee you I'm going to have dreams that that didn't go in and I went and celebrated and they're like, "You're going to have to come back and make this next one."

Yeah, it was one of the best putts I ever hit. I really enjoyed it. That was almost a cup out and it was downhill at the end, so it had to be great speed and a great line. I was happy with it.

Q. Jerry, you promised you were going to cry when you won, but you did get a little bit emotional when you talked to Jack out on the 18th tee, and your wife was here this time and you got to talk a little bit to your mom and talk about your dad up in heaven watching over you. Was it as emotional as you might have thought it would be?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah. I mean, the chills were flying up and down. It was pretty amazing. You know, my mom saying the sun came out, my dad was there. I haven't won since my dad passed, so this was the first one and I was talking to him all the time. There were a lot of birdies coming up and chirping right next to me and I was like, "Hey, hey, Dad, how are you?" It was kind of surreal.

But really, yeah, when I was talking about my son and giving the props to my wife like I need to, those are the two times that I really started getting a little choked up, but I'm just excited.

Q. Jerry, you have seen Steve make a million putts. How surprised were you that he missed both those, but especially the second one in the playoff?

JERRY KELLY: I mean, he was on the other side of the hole and missed it to one side, and then he was on this side of the hole and missed it. So you can see how each one of them got in his head a little bit that way. There's nothing easy on that pin placement right there. It's very deceiving. I know how slow his first putt was in the playoff because I left it even shorter.

He's the best putter I've ever known, best putter I've ever seen. He was just being really nice to me. He's a good host. No, no.

I can't say enough for him bringing this tournament here. You know, we tried so hard to bring the GMO back and to find something for Madison, but it's a great partnership for Jack and Steve. American Family's done so much for Madison, it's just incredible. I'm just happy to get it done with them.

Q. Did you have any time at all after Steve missed in the playoff to say anything other than "sorry" or anything like that? And was there a certain determination to win this, because I think if two Madison guys had fallen today, it would have been a pretty dark day for this tournament.

JERRY KELLY: You know, I read that article in the State Journal. It's like, you know, boy, we just can't get it done in Wisconsin.

This is such an individual sport and the timing has just got to be incredible for a Wisconsin guy to actually win a Wisconsin event. I mean, the odds are so stacked against you every single week, much less when you're playing in your hometown.

I think we have done a fantastic job of representing Wisconsin. We've been close in the GMO, we've both won the Western, we've been close here. I took it like, hey, I'm proud of my Wisconsin record and my Midwest record. I mean, look at him in the John Deere as well.

It's just not that easy. You can't just press a button and go, "Okay, we're in Wisconsin, it must be the Wisconsin guys." It's actually harder than it is easier. I think we've had a great record. And again, to have two of us in the playoff, I think it's impressive. It's just not that easy.

Q. Jerry, I'm guessing if they played this on Christmas you would be back to defend your title, but what are your thoughts on the tournament moving up three weeks next year?

JERRY KELLY: I think the worst thing about that is that Jack can't be here. I thought Mr. Nicklaus showing up for this was -- you know, it's testament to Steve and him getting the captaincy as well to have the greatest player in the game ever show up to your tournament

for you. I think that's fantastic. And I heard it's moving to the week of the Memorial, which is a shame.

You know, this grounds crew, the way they came through this spring. I mean, knock on wood, it can't be a much worst spring next year, can it? I hope. They'll have the place ready. Hopefully the guys won't complain that it's still winter, but they often do.

You know, Madison will represent regardless. You guys have proved yourself. The fans and the organization has done such a great job that the guys will come back regardless. It's going to be tough. We've got to pray for some good weather, no doubt.

Q. You've always said these hometown tournaments are your majors and now you go back into another major season on this tour. What does this win do for you given the fact that you were knocking on the door so often here the last nine weeks?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I'm really looking forward to the U.S. Open. I think I conserved fairly well this week. I didn't quite do my normal cooking and uncorking of wine that I normally would have. I have prepared myself well already for next week. I'm sure this will take a lot out of me, but I'm leaving at 9:18 tomorrow morning and I'll get there at 1:30 and start that week.

That's the great thing about this sport and the worst thing, is that, all right, we're all in first place for next week right now. You've got to go stay there basically. Yeah, I would love to win that one as well.

CHRIS RICHARDS: To put a cap on the week, where would you rank this win among your golfing accomplishments?

JERRY KELLY: I know, I know, that's so hard. I was telling Cookie, John Cook, as he was doing the interview out there, the first win at Sony was battling him down the stretch and this is -- I mean, to battle Strick down the stretch and to have a playoff and to be in Madison, I mean, they're neck and neck. I probably wouldn't be here without the Sony win, but there's no words for this one. It's right there, if not better.

CHRIS RICHARDS: All right. Well, thank you very much, Jerry, and congratulations.