

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
January 20, 2021



JIM FURYK

Q. Jim, welcome to Hualalai, Mitsubishi Electric Championship. Getting ready to start the 2021 year, how are you feeling and what are you looking forward to this year on PGA TOUR Champions?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I guess right now our schedule really kind of kicks up in May, so it's good to -- obviously always good to start the year here. This is our tournament of champions, it's a reward for having a good season or a good year the year previous. It's a limited field, there's only 42 guys, so always good.

This resort is amazing. I've heard so much about it from the Tour, from the players. It was built up, so I was kind of a little worried that it would never be able to meet expectations, but it's a beautiful resort. They put a lot of money into the golf course. I keep hearing about all the changes, which are pretty insignificant to me because I didn't see them before, so it's the first time that I've ever seen the golf course.

So the defense here is going to be that wind and the weather. And right now the greens are really, really firm because they're new, so that's another added dimension as well. There's going to be pins you just can't get to on these firm greens.

The place looks great and I know the players always love coming here, so it's great to be here for the first time. Hopefully, the first of many.

Q. Do you think the greens are a little bit of an equalizer for you because you're not relearning them like some of the other guys are?

JIM FURYK: Well, there's still some -- you know, I played Monday in a dead opposite wind, it was 180 degrees from what we'll see the rest of the week, so I kind of had to play the golf course but imagine an opposite wind, what clubs I'd hit off the tee. I really had to do some homework on how to play the golf course.

And then yesterday for most of the day it was breezy and kind of blew from the same direction it should during the tournament. So I got two practice rounds around and hopefully did enough work to understand the golf course.

And there's still always going to be some -- you know, I realize the greens have changed, they're significantly different, they're a lot flatter than the past, but there's always some course knowledge those guys will take from years previous that hopefully I'll gain in the future.

Q. Is there a specific type of game or specific type of player that this course favors more than another? You look at the field and who kind of stands out as somebody who -- a handful of guys who might play this course real well?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I don't know if a certain, like I wouldn't come out and say it favors a bomber or a real straight hitter or a style. I would say usually when you come to Hawaii it has to be someone that's comfortable playing in the wind. If you're not comfortable playing in a 15-plus mile-per-hour wind, Hawaii's usually not going to be your cup of tea.

Then I think for this year specifically, probably someone that can actually -- not that the longer player's going to have a benefit, but trying to get some shorter clubs into some of these greens, being able to stop the ball a little quicker on the firm surfaces is probably going to be a benefit just because they are so firm. Downwind, I've hit a lot of balls that are running out 20 yards after they hit, so they are brick hard.

Q. So this is your first year on the Champions Tour, correct?

JIM FURYK: I started -- I turned 50 last May, so in COVID I think my first event was late July.

Q. So what's the transition been like playing out here?

JIM FURYK: It's really not like -- there's some differences, but they're still golf tournaments. It's still very competitive and strong fields.

I've enjoyed the transition. I think it's a lot of fun. I've gotten to see a lot of friends that I haven't been able to be around the last five or 10 years after they turned 50, so I've enjoyed the camaraderie, I've enjoyed the competition, I've enjoyed getting in contention. Probably three out of the six events I had some chances to win golf tournaments, which was a lot of fun.

You know, the biggest difference, I guess, there's some misconceptions I think about the Champions Tour that everyone's having a beer, a glass of wine and no one's out on the practice tee. I mean, everyone's in the pro-am right now, so a very limited number of people, but after our rounds in the events I've played, the range is packed, the putting green's packed, chipping green's packed. I mean, guys are working hard on their games. They're enjoying kind of their second lease on their career.

Someone always shoots 15 under in three rounds, or more, so scores are low. And the golf courses, they're not short. They're 7,000 yards long, but they're not 7,400 yards long and that's a big difference. You start adding an extra 20 yards into the green on every hole, that adds up. It's harder to attack, it's harder to get the ball close, it's harder to make birdies.

So coming out here I've noticed I have more opportunities to attack. I go from being one of the shorter players on the PGA TOUR to one of the longer players on the Champions Tour

and it's fun to -- the bulk of my game has kind of been around my short irons and attacking flags from, you know, 120 yards and in and I get more opportunities out here to do that. I get more opportunities for birdies. If I'm putting well, if my game's on, I'm going to make more birdies and shoot some good scores.

So I've kind of enjoyed that process and I've enjoyed maybe not getting to know my 4-iron quite as well as I have for the last five years. Kind of tired of him anyway.