

**SCOTT McCARRON**

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**CONNOR STANGE:** We'll get started with Scott McCarron. You come in here as not only the defending champion, but you've won on this golf course a couple other times. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, it's certainly a golf course I like. The first time I played here was I think 1997 with Greg Norman. He designed the golf course, so I called him and told him I want to play a practice round with him. We played late afternoon on a Tuesday. It was kind of fun. He kind of showed me what he was trying to do with some of the golf holes, where you could take off some yardage by cutting some of the corners. So I learned a lot and I ended up going out and winning that week for my second win on the PGA TOUR.

Then I won again here in 2001 and then won again here last year, or two years ago, and playing a new nine, which we hadn't seen before. So it's obviously a very special place to me. And I probably in 1997 should have bought a house here and moved here. We do love it.

**Q. Does it seem like a lifetime or forever ago since you've been here last?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** It does feel like a long time. Just two weeks ago I was also defending at Houston and it was also two years since we had been there. I won also in Japan, which I don't know if I'll ever go back, be able to defend that. Hopefully we'll be able to go back there in a couple years. But it does feel like a long time ago coming back, but I still get the same feelings when I come back here. It's a golf course I like, a golf course I have a lot of good success at, a lot of good feelings, so looking forward to getting this thing started tomorrow.

**Q. Even in the last couple years, is it much harder to win out here now because of the influx of new players?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, it's hard to win anywhere, but the guys coming out are really good and they're hungry. Look at Alex Cejka last week, this guy was still kind of competing on the PGA TOUR and still trying to Monday qualify for events and going to play anything he could. I mean, he's still hungry and he wants to prove himself. And you've got Ernie Els, Retief Goosen, all these guys are Hall of Famers and they're good. I mean, they were really good back in the day and they're still really good and a lot of them can still compete on the PGA TOUR.

So it does get harder as you age. The guys get younger coming out and that's just kind of the nature of the game. But having said that, you look at guys like Bernhard Langer and what he's able to do at 63, it's pretty impressive. So a lot of guys look at that and say if I can

stay in shape and stay competitive, I can still play until my early 60s.

**Q. What's your synopsis of your game right now? Where are you at?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, I've had a tough go over the last seven months. I had a tear in my left ankle and anybody, any golfer has a tear in their left ankle, it makes it very difficult to play. And I played through it, which probably shouldn't have, probably should have taken some time off, but it's starting to feel better. Last week was kind of the first week I was able to swing without thinking about the pain. I feel like I'm finally on my way back, but it's been a tough seven months.

**Q. Do you see this as maybe an opportunity to kind of jump start things a little bit, coming back to a place where you --**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, anywhere, anytime you come to a golf course where you've had a lot of success, you have the good feelings and hopefully you can jump start something and get something going for the rest of the year.

**Q. Is there anything different around here from '97 that you remember? What's it like?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah, all the houses that are there that weren't there before. You know, I would say I just think this community's grown up quite a bit, not only here in this community, but around the golf course everything's grown up quite a bit. I know when we first came here, we stayed closer to town, downtown Atlanta, and drove out here because there wasn't a lot out here at the time. So it's really grown up and I think that's the biggest thing.

As far as the golf course, I have not seen it since the other nine, the front nine, was redone so I look forward to getting out there and seeing some of the changes. I know they took out some bunkers and reshaped some stuff, so looking forward to seeing it.

**Q. What's your best memories from '97?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah, I think, I'm trying to remember. I think I won on Mother's Day and my mom and dad were spending a little time down in Myrtle Beach and happened to drive over and watch me play, so that was pretty cool and pretty special to win in front of my mom on Mother's Day, I remember that. It was pretty cool.

And then, was that '97? No, 2001. So that's what I remember.

The other one was 2001 when I won and the next week was the Masters and I didn't get in. That was a bad memory. That's right after they stopped doing -- yeah, that was a terrible rule, which obviously they changed back, but it cost me playing the Masters that year.

**Q. I was just going to say that golf as you know is insular by nature. How do you**

**insulate yourself from this influx of all these other players? I know Bernhard was always a target to you and kind of the goal.**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah.

**Q. How do you not concern yourself, take care of your business as you always have?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, golf is an individual sport so all I can do is control what I can control and go through the process, focus on the process, not the outcome. If I go out and take care of my business, meaning staying in shape, getting plenty of rest, practicing the right way, getting instruction when I need it, taking time off when I need it, then I'm probably going to play some good golf as long as I'm healthy, because I can't worry about the guys that are coming out because these guys are good. They really are. I'm not really worried about the guys that are coming out. If I take care of my business, then I'm probably going to play well and I'll still be successful.

**Q. You've always had great power. How has that ankle affected --**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Oh, it's affected everything. I can't get to my left side, so I've been hitting and backing off the left side over the right side and you can't play golf, competitive golf, out here with these guys with that injury. But I still got a little ankle brace on.

But I have to admit, last week was the first week that I was able to swing and I wasn't thinking about the pain coming, so that was big. That was a big step because a lot of times when you have injuries, you start getting better and feeling better, but your brain's still kind of waiting for that pain and every swing I was having a lot of pain there for a long time. So it's a matter of finally overcoming that.

**Q. Are where did it come from? What happened?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** It's kind of the way my feet are, very high arches. So I sprained my ankles a lot as a kid and just that wear and tear over time. After about 50, sometimes they'll just tear. It did it on the right ankle four years ago, I still competed and played well, but it bothered me for a year and a half to two years, but the right ankle's no big deal because you're swinging and keeping all your weight on the inside of your right foot. But the left ankle, for a right-handed golfer, I'm posting up and all the weight is going right to that ankle.

**Q. Has it affected your wake boarding?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** I haven't really been on the wake board much, and when I do, I have to wear an ankle brace and it's bad. So I'm ready to start wake boarding again probably next week, the weather looks pretty good at home. We'll get the boat in the water and hopefully do some wake surfing.