

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
June 9, 2021



JIM FURYK

Q. Jim, you're making your first start here in Madison this week. Just your thoughts on being here?

JIM FURYK: Well, obviously excited about the week, having Steve be a player-host and this being his hometown. I've never been to Madison. I've heard so much nice about it, so it's great to be here. We've been friends for a long time. I'm excited to play his event and be here in Madison.

Q. Did you have a chance to play the course yet?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, yeah, I played 18 yesterday. It's a big golf course for us as far as we're coming off of a week in Des Moines with probably one of the shorter, tighter golf courses that we play all year. This is going to be a little bit more of a bigger, open golf course. It's got some tight holes on it, but a little longer than the ones we've seen here recently. It's a good golf course, huge greens. Trying to imagine kind of in my mind where pin locations, hole locations are going to be. I know usually the rules staff has the previous year's pin sheets available, so I kind of take a look at those, learning where you're supposed to hit it off the tee and play the golf course probably. The golf course is in front of you I think for that much, but the greens themselves, there's a lot of movement on them, a lot of different hole locations that are possible and so learning that part of the golf course is probably the most difficult.

Q. From what you've learned so far, Jim, do you think this course fits your game?

JIM FURYK: I kind of want to see how they set it up. Yeah, I don't have any reservations or anything that I didn't like about the golf course, if that makes sense. I felt like a lot of it for me is like sightlines off the tee, being able to look at a yardage book, look out in front of you. I felt for the most part I knew where I was supposed to hit it.

The first time I played I think maybe 16 was one where I did not aim in the proper spot the first time, but play it once and you kind of get it know it. Most of the holes, though, I think are set up real well by the bunkering. There's a hole on the front nine that runs up the ridge, maybe 4 kind of runs uphill to the right. Trying to figure out how much you bite off there down the right side is probably key. Most of it was right there in front of you and the golf course looked good. It's in phenomenal shape.

Q. What had you heard about this event prior to committing to play and why eventually decide -- your relationship with Steve you chose to come?

JIM FURYK: Well, I mean, there's a little bit -- there's a -- that's about a three-part question

for me. So my wife and I, I'm a player-host as well in Jacksonville. We're starting a new event in Jacksonville, Florida. I've kind of -- in that process, I've reached out to a lot of players on this tour and asked them what are their favorite events, which are the ones that you get excited about playing, what are your favorite events. Let's take the majors out, go.

This event is always one of the first ones if not the first one mentioned. So a lot of that has to do with Steve and the respect that he has from all the players, but also they talk about it has a big feel, meaning it gets a lot of support from the community, a lot of fans, and that may not always be the case in some of the venues we play. So when we come out here, we get excited about it being -- having a big impact on the community, seeing everyone come out, supporting the golf tournament and that big feel is, we have a good time with that. We missed that through COVID, we missed the fans being at the golf course, so that's one of the things they mentioned.

So it's got a great reputation on this tour, guys like playing. We also don't -- we're not the same model as the PGA TOUR. We don't have 47 weeks where you can play golf and you have to kind of pick and choose your events, right. We have a much smaller -- I think we play about 28 weeks, and this year COVID took a few of those out. So the nice part about that is you're going to see Bernhard and Ernie and Retief; the fan favorites play most of the events and that kind of makes it fun. We're kind of a little bit of a traveling circus, we're all at every event and we get to know each other really well.

Q. So you're taking notes about this tournament then?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I've picked little things up, I've taken pictures, sent them back to my wife and our team. I pick little things up from every event and try to see if we can incorporate some of the things. After you've been to -- I've played whatever it is, 700 hundred tournaments, I didn't really take a look outside the ropes as much as I did inside, so I'm spending a little bit more time kind of looking at setup. We have the ops team. I saw some of the HNS folks here. We have the same ops team doing our event. But just taking notes, tents, where things are set up, asking them questions, what does it look like usually, is it any different because of COVID this year and there's a few minor changes apparently, but it looks very similar.

Q. Jim, you're obviously the fans are going to be interested in your threesome you've got going, a couple of guys you know pretty well.

JIM FURYK: Yeah, fun to be playing with Steve and Fred. It's funny, like I've gotten paired with Ernie Els quite a bit, we always laugh. Darren Clarke quite a bit, Colin Montgomery quite a bit. Got a new pairing this week. I think Fred and I have been paired once. he doesn't play as often anymore, but Fred and I have been paired a couple times. I'm not sure Steve and I have played, maybe only one other event where we've both been in the field for a Champions Tour event. It will be a lot of support out there for him. Kind of a cool year for him in that not only does he get to host this event each and every year and kind of do it in his hometown, but also being the Ryder Cup captain in his home state, pretty amazing. So I'm

honored to be a part of that as well and help him out any way I can as a vice captain and kind of see it. But fans up here have always been great, they've always been very supportive whether it's been Whistling Straits or Erin Hills, anytime we've been in the Wisconsin area. I can't wait to see them at a Ryder Cup, I'll say that.

Q. Jim, it feels like the world is returning to normal. Does it feel that way for sports, too?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I think we're getting there. We're starting to see more fans. Last week we had a pretty good turnout at Des Moines. It's starting to ramp up, you're starting to hear the cheers and some roars around a golf course, which is fun. I don't know if we all can just relax and rest, but we're getting back to normal and that's really cool to see. I think everyone needed it.

Q. Can you kind of put into words playing an event with no fans?

JIM FURYK: It's just an awkward environment. You're so used to -- I guess as a player, the first thing you notice, just the silence. You're used to relying on fan reaction to see how good a shot is. You can't always see where the ball ends up, elevated greens, pins behind bunkers. You kind of rely on that reaction, you kind of feed off that reaction, the excitement, roars, and when you're playing it's kind of cool.

Last week I heard -- we were out there playing and I could hear a giant roar coming from 15. You're like, well, you know Stephen Ames is around that area, he must have just knocked in a birdie putt or whatever. You kind of start to get a feel for what's going on on the golf course, but it just gives it an electricity and a buzz and we lacked that.

I think the one thing we have to really be -- we all have to be very aware of is how lucky we were to come back as early as we did in June. The Tour did such a good job of getting the PGA TOUR back into play, and then the Champions Tour and the Korn Ferry behind them. We're out here still able to do our jobs and make a living, which not everyone was that fortunate to do. And then those events, those cities, those communities that we play in often rely on those events for the charitable dollars that they raise. Each and every tournament does a great job of helping the community and that was the biggest shame. I know on the PGA TOUR last year I think we missed 13 events and that was the biggest impact to those cities, they're going to miss out on some needed charitable dollars as well.

Q. Jim, you mentioned your relationship with Steve. What's the camaraderie like on the Champions Tour? You're all competitors, you all want to win, but just knowing each other as long as you have and playing together as long as you have.

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's been great for me to see some old friends that I haven't seen for a while in playing the PGA TOUR. You know, I think the guys out here, when we were younger and 25 years old, everyone was trying to kind of make a name for himself and try to scratch out a piece of history with their name on it. It was our livelihood. You still felt -- as

a 25-year-old you felt that pressure.

So I guess I was probably a little bit more businesslike and probably not aware of my surroundings as much. Didn't quite understand what made a tournament -- you know, understood the entire surround of a golf tournament and what made it go and work.

I think for the guys out here now over 50, it's a little bit of a second lease on life, another chance to stay competitive. We all enjoy getting in the hunt trying to win golf tournaments, so it gives us opportunities to do that again, but I think you're a little bit more aware of your surroundings. I know now being on the other side and trying to run an event as well or being part of running an event, how key the pro-ams are, how important those days are. So I think the guys just do a really good job out here of maybe making sure that going that extra while and making sure the pro-am partners have a good time, going that extra mile and making sure we put on a good show for the fans and also understanding how fortunate we are to do it.