

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
June 10, 2021



JERRY KELLY

Q. We'll get started with Jerry Kelly here. Can you just start with some overall thoughts on being back here?

JERRY KELLY: Oh, I mean, so missed not having this tournament last year. You know, everybody went through so much, so it was a little thing for us to do to not hold it, but it was tough not playing. It's great being back. It's great having fans back; that was kind of a pain out there. We're happy to put on a show and do our job, but now it feels like our job again. It feels like really fun, great time, interaction, that's what we're looking for. No better place to interact with the fans than Madison, so really happy to be here.

Q. Jerry, you look like you're in as good of shape as ever. Did you do it without getting hurt and how are you health-wise?

JERRY KELLY: No, I hurt myself doing it. I got in really good shape leading up to THE PLAYERS and then two days before I left from THE PLAYERS I (indiscernible) my weight and I hurt myself again, tore a little leg and hurt my shoulder. I haven't been able to do a whole lot since then, but really put a lot into golf. That's been enough. We're back to playing a decent amount, so I don't have to go through all the workouts and things like that. So I've slowly gotten better and I'm definitely starting to feel better. It's still there. I broke my driver, so I'm having to do driver testing and take a ton of those swings, that doesn't help the old guy. No, I think I found a replacement and I'm feeling good. I feel just fine.

Q. You were the champion for two years, I think that's a record for this tournament.

JERRY KELLY: Yep.

Q. What's it going to take to be the champion for the third year this year?

JERRY KELLY: Lowest score, Jocko. It doesn't get any better than that. I mean, hey, it was a lot tougher last year. It played longer and it played softer, it was cool and it was windy. We get conditions like this, these guys are going to go low. You try not to put too much pressure on yourself right away and think if you're not 5 under par the first nine, oh, I'm so far behind, I've got to catch up, but it's the way it feels sometimes. That's what motivates us and sometimes it helps to kick us in the butt and catch up to those guys, sometimes it's a detriment, but I think it's going to take a pretty low score.

Q. Jerry, for so many years you and the rest of the Wisconsin contingent talked about how you wanted to win one of the Wisconsin tournaments. What did two years ago mean to you and how does it motivate you going forward?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, well, you guys can't call us 0-fers anymore, that's good. We always came so close. The crowds always lifted us up. One of us always seemed to have a chance, whether it was the GMO or it was here, even the Western. We both won at the Western, which was really close, too. So our records close to home are really good, but we still didn't have that win. So to be the first one to get that win, that was important. That was really fun.

Q. What memories do you have of that day? Do they come back being here right now?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, my picture right over there when I was about to jump into my caddie's arms right there. It's just a lot of emotion came out, it was really cool. The whole family was there, my mom was watching and it was just really cool to have that moment. Everybody was there and it was a lot of roars, and that's what we kind of live for, it's what we play for. Glad I was able to pull it off.

Q. What's this week like for you and how do you balance everything that comes with playing in your backyard?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, these COVID tickets are a mess, I'll tell you that right now.

Please, whoever's at the gate, please let everybody in that has the same ticket because I don't know how to distribute them. Yeah, that's my normal stuff, I've got to go back and tell everybody, yeah, you have the same ticket, good luck. My phone will be off, so you won't be able to call me and see what's going on.

I enjoy having those distractions to a point, but it's fun. Got a lot of extra family in town, coming into town just to watch this. Yeah, I can't wait. I'll see them the next couple nights.

Q. I believe there's five local golfers this year. What do you like about adding guys from around the area?

JERRY KELLY: Well, I will say I could almost feel honored to be playing in the same tournament as Andy North, I think that's really cool. His sixth decade playing, two U.S. Opens and Westchester is kind of like three U.S. Opens. He's the one who put us on the path that we're still on luckily. He also paved the way on this tour for us. He's been a huge inspiration and I -- serious, I love the fact that he's playing in this tournament. He's the whole reason that the rest of us are playing.

Q. Jerry, Mario was here before. Couldn't remember if you guys had been at Madison East at the same time. He said he was a freshman when you were a senior and you might have perhaps treated him like a senior would treat a freshman in any walk of life.

JERRY KELLY: Oh, yeah.

Q. Do you remember what it was like when he was a youngster at your high school?

JERRY KELLY: Oh, yeah. We had a few rituals at East. It wasn't that buttoned-up Edgewood over there. This was Madison East, we had to fight for our lunch over there a little bit. Had to make sure that, you know, it wasn't hazing, it wasn't hazing, but it might have hurt.

Q. Is that buttoned-up Edgewood going to fly with your cousin?

JERRY KELLY: No, no, not too much. Maybe not even my son. Edgewood was great for my family and Carol's family, but I really enjoyed my time at East. It was real life. It taught me a lot, especially when I started traveling and going to other parts of the world and the country.

But I wouldn't be right here if it wasn't for somebody like Milt McPike. You get a principal like that to scoot you out of trouble when you get into it and tells you things straight the right way and puts you on the right path. You know, he did that for me and I never would be able to repay him. What was the question?

Q. About Mario.

JERRY KELLY: Mario, yeah. Treated him poorly, of course I did. That's my job.

Q. And then your mom, how much has she been able to watch you during the pandemic and is she going to be out here this week and does that make extra special?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, it's great. I saw her out on the golf course yesterday, stopped by, watched a few holes after our match with McCarrens. She was all disappointed and all of a sudden she knocks it on 6 and she's making 20-footers and getting up and down from everywhere. She's awesome. She still fights for every single shot, I mean every single shot. I know where I get it from, no question.

But to have her out there is always that much more special. Got my sister Sue coming in from New Jersey with Big Joe. He's coming in, too. And the rest of my family's in town. We're going to have everybody together, which will be pretty cool and we'll have some fun.

Q. The match with the McCarrens, was that you and -- that wasn't Erik with you, was it?

JERRY KELLY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Q. How did that work out?

JERRY KELLY: I don't want to boast. I mean, I don't want to -- did I say that? We might have clipped them, we might have clipped them, but it was fun. We just go out and have a good time and then go back and have a good dinner, go out on the boat. Yeah, it was great. They haven't been able to do that because it's been such tough weather for the tournaments every single year, so it was nice to get them out, take a spin around the lake, show them all the cool spots. It was fun.(Final block.ecl)