

JIM FURYK

CONNOR STANGE: We'll go ahead and get started with Jim Furyk. Welcome to the Cologuard Classic. Can you just start with your thoughts on being back here in Tucson, this week?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, it's always fun to come back to Tucson. Obviously going to school here, mom and dad lived here for quite a while and I spent a lot of time at Tucson National. Lived real close to here for a couple years in school, practiced a lot here, played a lot of golf out of this golf course, so it brings back some good memories and also some good memories with my team.

Q. You've been on the tour now, this tour, for over a year. How would you summarize what the overall experience has been like so far?

JIM FURYK: I've enjoyed it, I've enjoyed it. It was time for me to kind of turn a new page and start the next chapter. You know, I'm not really -- I still feel like there's some courses I can be competitive on tour, but there's not nearly as many as there used to. I just don't hit the ball far enough at the age of almost 52 now to really compete on a ton of golf courses.

I come out here on the Champions Tour and golf courses aren't quite as long. Still extremely competitive, still a bunch of great players and Hall of Famers out here. So week in and week out it's just been a lot of fun, to be honest with you. I've enjoyed working on my game and enjoyed hitting some 8-irons again instead of 4-iron it seems like every hole. I've really enjoyed it.

This is my home and I'm going to dabble and play I think three events on the regular tour this year. Last year I think it was seven, this year it's going to be three and it's just going to keep decreasing until it's zero for the future.

Q. You won your first two events out here. Did you think at that point, hey, this is going to be easy?

JIM FURYK: No, no, I didn't think that. I was happy to kind of get off to a good start. I did it on two golf courses that I was really comfortable on, at Warwick Hills, where I won a PGA TOUR event, and at Pebble Beach, where I played over 20 events at. Golf courses I knew very well, golf courses I've played well in the past, so it was a nice place to start my career.

No, you start looking down the list, just go down the list of names of guys on this tour. As I said, Hall-of-Fame caliber and guys that have won dozens and dozens of events worldwide, each one of them. It's competitive. It's three rounds, it's a shootout and you know you're

going to have to shoot -- seems like you have to shoot 15 under-plus every week for three rounds to put yourself in position to win.

Q. There was a lot of excitement and anticipation when you came here last year, your sort of return to Tucson. You tied for 17th. Did you put any extra pressure on yourself?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I think I did. My game wasn't in great shape when I arrived here last year and yeah, I probably tried a little too hard. It was one of my -- definitely was one of my lower finishes, not the best finish of the year, but that's part of it, you can't play well every week. It's disappointing.

There's events that you pick out on the calendar that you'd really like to play well at, major championships, some of the bigger events we have, my home event. We have Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS, that's an event I want to play well. Obviously coming to Tucson, a place where I went to school, that's one of those places.

Your game's not going to be sharp for 12 months of the year, you hope you kind of pick off. I was able to have my game in great shape during the U.S. Senior Open, so it was nice to get a win there, but you're trying to peak at certain times and you can't always do that. Trying, but I can't always do that.

Q. How do you feel about your game right now?

JIM FURYK: It's been -- coming off a really bad week last week, played very poorly. I drove the ball very poorly last week on a very tight, difficult golf course. Not a good combo for that place. I needed like a real wide open course last week that I did not have.

I've been kind of working on trying to get better with the driver, trying to get the ball in play. I feel like the rest of my play, I feel like my iron game's pretty good, I feel like my short game's pretty good, but the driver's been a little bit of a weakness here the last few months and something I've been working on really hard.

Q. Do you think that the conditions today and yesterday will help you in any way when you start the tournament tomorrow?

JIM FURYK: I would go with probably not. I can't think of a positive. If the weather were going to be like this tomorrow or Saturday or Sunday, then I'd say yes. You kind of draw from how cold it was, how far the ball's flying. We're always trying to come and get used to the elevation. We're at about 2,300 feet I think, so you're trying to get used to the elevation, how far the ball's going. You almost negate, nullify all of that with the cold weather.

We teed off this morning, it was probably 38 degrees or whatever when we teed off, ball was going nowhere. I don't think we're going to see that same weather, especially with afternoon tee times for the next three days, so probably not.

I'm not sure they actually had an opportunity to mow the greens today because of the frost, so they could turn around and be -- I would expect to see them a little quicker tomorrow. There were a few things I had my eye on that I would have liked to have maybe gotten more used to my yardages and distances and the elevation here, but I've got a lot of experience in Tucson, I should be able to figure it out pretty quick.

Q. Is there anything you can learn from last year's tournament that might help you this weekend?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I kind of got to see how the golf course was set up and how it played. I think I played it a little conservative off the tee at times and I made a mental note that I needed to be a little more aggressive. As far as, yeah, you're always going to draw from experiences. I think it's fun to go and win a golf tournament and then you always have that great feeling going back, but you can draw from a tournament. Last year I didn't play poorly, but I also didn't play as well as I would have liked and you can draw a lot from that as well.

Q. What's your relationship like with Annika Sorenstam?

JIM FURYK: Friendly, friendly. Annika came to our event. I think she's here as a celebrity on the weekend and she did the same for our event last year. We played a little golf in college, but not much. I think we probably teed it up a couple times. The men's and the women's team didn't really play a ton together when I was in school. You know, always very friendly. We had both of our fathers at the PNC a couple years ago, so we got to play a tournament round with both our parents, which was a lot of fun. I admire her career, but also admire Annika as a person and I would say we're friendly, for sure.

Q. She was saying before this that she's been working with Laura Ianello, the women's golf coach, about maybe adding a clubhouse. I don't know if you've been talking with her about maybe doing something with both golf programs?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, that's in the mix. I think whether that's -- whether that's our -- that goes all the way up to actually to Bobby Robbins as well. The president of the school is very involved and trying to -- trying to I guess build some facilities for the programs and get better.

I mean, I would feel a lot more comfortable about it if our athletic director or Bobby or our golf coaches probably are the ones that need to mention that, but I will be involved.

Q. You kind of came up through the ranks with David Duval, who he obviously had a great PGA TOUR career but it didn't last as long as yours, he had injuries and so forth. Now he's trying to kind of restart his career. How big of a challenge is that when you haven't played in a competitive environment for a long time?

JIM FURYK: It's tough, it's tough. I think David's one of the best players I ever played

alongside. He was the No. 1 player in the world. We played a lot of golf together, especially when he was at the peak of his career, so I have a lot of respect for what he's able to do.

I think coming back from injury, that's kind of what pushed him off the tour I think was injuries, and then also not playing a lot of competitive golf for the last 10 years. So I think a lot of it's going to be patience. And it's hard, I think it's hard for a competitor to be patient. When I take four months off and I come back or I've kind of come back from some injuries and surgeries and you're away from the game and come back, it takes a little while to get back in. That's four to six months. Trying doing that now in 10 years is a lot.

So I think a lot of it's just patience and letting things progress and trying to get better each and every week and building on it, building some confidence really is what it is.

Q. What would it mean to you to win this weekend?

JIM FURYK: It would be a lot of fun. Obviously everyone's showing up here with the opportunity and the goal is to try to win a golf tournament, but I would definitely, before my career's over out here, this is an event that I would tag as one that would be on a short list of ones I'd really like to win.

Q. Is there something special about if you win here, you get to put the helmet on, which I don't know of any other tournaments you win where you get to put a helmet on?

JIM FURYK: That would be -- don't take this the wrong way, but that might actually be the one thing -- I don't -- it's not the prettiest thing I've ever seen. I have a picture of Phil when he was like 23 in my head and it didn't look so good, I'm just going to say.

But it's a cool trophy and I don't know if you could take one of those home or what, but it would look really good on a shelf. I'm sure the guys that have won it are very proud to have it on their shelves, as they should be.

Q. Real quick, have you heard talk about what's going on with the other golf tour?

JIM FURYK: I don't hear a lot of folks talk about it out here. I think it's blown up a lot in the last week and we've heard it, read it, seen everything. We've seen how a lot of the players have reacted to the news in the last five to seven days, but I don't hear -- it's not a huge buzz out here on the Champions Tour. I hear it mentioned, but I'm sure if we were on the PGA TOUR, that would probably be the major topic of conversation out there.

It's interesting. It's hard to be out here and kind of get a real good feel, but I try to reach out. Like my agent, my management company represent a lot of the younger guys on tour, so they have a pretty good feel what's going on. I try to reach out to them and stay abreast instead of trying to go through the rumor mill so much. Try to do the best I can to stay up on the current events. I'm very supportive of the tour.