

U.S. Senior Open

Flash Interview

Friday June 30, 2017

Fred Couples



THE MODERATOR: Fred Couples, 5-under 65, 7-under 133 for the Championship.

Q. Did you enjoy your day? I would think you did.

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. I mean, it was -- you know, I'd say we had a really good ball striking group, and Jay struggled the second nine, but the first nine he was 5 under, and he was showing everyone there were some birdies out there.

I was a little bit disappointed to three-putt 18, or my ninth hole. I hit really two beautiful shots below the hole. In the fairway, I watched Vijay and O'Meara both miss putts from above the hole, and I just told myself do not run this even 3 feet by, and I left it 5 feet short.

I hit it well. I drove it well. I think I was in most of the fairways, and I had a little roll where I make a putt and I make another one. And then just try not to make bogies.

Q. Have you always, when you've won, been able to carry that into a run of play?

FRED COUPLES: I don't remember. Probably not that many times, since I didn't win it a lot.

Q. What was the big difference, though, Fred, from today and yesterday?

FRED COUPLES: Well, I made one from off the green on, I don't know, 15, 16. So, I mean when you do -- yeah, it was 6 or 7, five paces off the green. When you do stuff like that and you play the same, you're going to get a better score.

But then, you know, I missed a couple. I missed a couple yesterday too. So, really, I drove it much better today. Yesterday, I played from the rough a couple times in the first cut.

To be honest, today, I think I was in most of the fairways except for maybe a dogleg right, like No. 13. I was in the first cut, and in the morning I played a safe shot. But if you're playing the afternoon, whether today or tomorrow, you start missing fairways, you're not going to -- you'll be lucky to get a ball on the green.

Q. Were you at 100 percent comfort level yesterday or more comfortable on the golf course today?

FRED COUPLES: Yesterday, some of the pins were over here, and then I was trying to figure out the

greens. Today, a lot of the pins were over there. So I'm getting a look at these greens, but I still don't -- I haven't had one where I hit it where I really didn't want to and have it roll off a green down an embankment. I did leave the one short, but that was really probably the easiest pin of the day, and I felt like where it was, it might be a tough pin. So I tried to get really cute, and I came up short, and it trickled off the green.

But as you walk up there, where I made that one, we all birdied. It was the easiest pin all day. But there are some dicey ones, really, really -- and that's where I hit good shots below the hole and I watched guys struggle on some other holes, Brandt and Jay a little bit, saying 30 feet's not all that bad.

Q. You like your position, just a few back?

FRED COUPLES: I just like shooting a good score. It's a tough little course. It's not like you go, oh, my God. I mean, 17 and 18 are long in yardage. I had a 7 iron, and 18 plays a little shorter because it's downhill, but the green makes up for it.

But I like where I'm at. 5 under is better than playing the same and shooting 2 under. We all know the lower you go, the more under par you are. But, for me, if I can drive it like that, I'll be in great shape.

Q. On 9, how far did you have into the --

FRED COUPLES: Second shot, 144 yards, I think. I hit an 8.

Q. How far was that?

FRED COUPLES: Probably six, seven, feet.

Q. [Inaudible].

FRED COUPLES: I read it wrong, and it wasn't a hard putt. I didn't read it right. Actually, when their putts were rolling up, they were rolling this way and I thought, you know, can this thing be right center and fall left, and it actually broke to the right, which is where we thought it was going to go from the get-go. But they're very tricky greens.

It's really the side ones that are brutal. When you're downhill and they're breaking a foot from 5 feet -- Jay made a couple, and it's fun to watch. And then when you get other ones -- perfect putts, you have to hit on these greens.

But then when you get a 20-footer with very little break, they're perfect pace, and you'll see a lot of putts made, and that's pretty much where I made most of mine today.

Q. You mentioned the other day in the media tent, obviously, your back, and you brought your specialist in. Curious, A, how are you feeling? B, what did you have to do with the late round and then the early round to kind of get ready for today?

FRED COUPLES: 8:00 tee times are not good for me. But I got up a little early and moved around, and Chad worked on it, and I got all sweaty. Then you come out here, and everything's close. I mean, once you go to the range, you go to the putting green, and then the tees are right there. So I try to time it where I'm staying warm and where I'm swinging.

I didn't hit it very good on the range. Again, it's 7:30. Unless it's a Major on this Tour, I'm not playing at 7:30 ever anymore. When I go to Wales, I'm going to have to have that tee time too. So you just try and hope for the best.

Q. What time did you get up?

FRED COUPLES: 5:00.

Q. What keeps you motivated out here?

FRED COUPLES: Well, I mean, motivated, I don't play that much, and a lot of it's health related because I don't want to play when I don't feel well. I think on the regular Tour, you've got sponsors, and you're doing all that, and they're paying you a lot of money.

I know it sounds chintzy because I still am with Mitsubishi and Ultimate and Bridgestone. They're still paying me. But I physically don't want to go play if I don't feel well. So it's very easy for me to not feel well and just go away. Whereas when I was 45 or 46 or 47, you know, it was very difficult to do that.

Q. But when it feels good, like winning last week, gets the juices going?

FRED COUPLES: You know what? It's feeling good. If I feel good, I feel like I can be in contention. If I have a good round like I did on Sunday and win, yeah, it's a great feeling. But it doesn't make my -- like right now, after shooting 65, I feel like I'm going to break in half standing here, but it's like that every day.

Then I'll go rest, and I won't do anything, and then by 9:00, I'll feel better, and by tomorrow morning I'll feel good.

But after I play, literally, I honestly feel like when I stop, I can't play another hole. Like right now, if you put me

in the middle of the 18th fairway with a 9 iron, I don't think I could hit it, but I could probably play 36 holes if I don't stop. I don't think I'd play the last 18 very well, but I could keep moving.

That's just part of the thing with my body. It just tightens up pretty fast.