

U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

Wednesday June 27, 2018

Roy Biancalana



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Welcome to the 39th U.S. Senior Open at the Broadmoor here at Colorado Springs. This is the second Senior Open for the Broadmoor and 8th USGA championship at the resort's courses. We are pleased to welcome Roy Biancalana who qualified for this year's championship on May 30th at the Village Links of Glen Ellyn in Illinois, with a 69, to earn one of three qualifying spots. He is a well-known relationship coach and has more of a story than that, which he assures me, and is playing in his first Senior Open.

And, Roy, before we get started with questions from the folks out there, you just have a fascinating story, and that's obviously why you're here.

Do you have a story maybe that sums up your career as a competitive golfer, a minister, a relationship coach, anything else that kind of puts a stamp for who you be.

ROY BIANCALANA: A story? Oh, my lord. Well, I just think that, for me, I got out of competitive golf in 2007. I was 47 or so. My son -- I had been through a divorce a couple years before that. My son was living in Florida and I wanted to be a full-time dad. So I moved from Chicago down to Orlando, Florida to be around him, and I started my relationship coaching practice. And.

Then he graduated college and got a job and moved away. Kid. And so I'm like "What am I doing in Florida anymore?" So I moved back to Chicago and was able to resume teaching where I had been teaching and be able to get back into playing again. And then keep my other coaching practice going, because it's all digital and over the phone.

So for four or five months in the summer I'm very busy. But, yeah, so I'm back now playing. And I think that the thing that may surprise you is in the last two and a half months I've played more rounds of golf than I played in the last 11 years. So I've only played -- I tried to count up eight competitive rounds of golf before May 1st, since 2007.

So this is my, I feel like a rookie, like, so nervous out there. Even though I've been in six other major championships, it's been like another lifetime since I played. So I'm starting over.

THE MODERATOR: For the record, as a PGA pro, you also -- what's your educational expertise? Do you have degrees in certain --

ROY BIANCALANA: I have a degree in marketing from LSU back in 1983. No, my training in the relationship coaching end just comes from all the mistakes I made, frankly. I mean, I made every mistake you can possibly make in relationships. So I just tell people, just don't do what I did.

No, actually, I've been through a lot of -- what I do is not really psychology, it's not something that a university teaches. I am more of a person that helps people grow in spiritual awareness, to live more consciously and intentionally.

So the universities don't train you in that. That's more that you would get, frankly, from an Ashram or a yoga teacher or a spiritual mentor/guide, is kind of what I am for my clients.

So, yeah, it's not traditional therapy. My wife is a therapist, and we just do different things and we have different trainings.

THE MODERATOR: Your game's good enough to have qualified for the Senior Open. Of course you're proud of that, but what was the change that you wanted to make that now you've got this concerted effort to play more competitive golf? What drove that?

ROY BIANCALANA: Well, I really missed competing. I think my wife noticed I miss it more than I did. She would notice my mood would change when I would watch golf on TV.

She's like, you always get really ornery when you're watching guys on TV. So I just missed playing. I think to an extent I was kind of born to hit a golf ball.

And even though I only played seven or eight competitive round in the last 11 years and no more than five or 10 rounds of golf a year, period, I was at the driving range probably five days a week because I just love hitting a golf ball. I just can stand there all day and just hit it. It's the funnest thing in the world for me.

So I don't want to mislead like I haven't touched a club

in 11 years and just came out and got in the Senior Open, I just haven't played and competed because I had other things I was doing.

THE MODERATOR: So we'll open it up to questions now.

Q. You're coming full circle where you played in five U.S. Opens in what seems like another life. Can you take us on the start of that journey away from golf where I believe you took an internship with a church and then you started your own church and you actually applied to a seminary at one time.

ROY BIANCALANA: Yeah, way back. Yeah, I've had two great passions in my life. One is golf and the other is spirituality. And they have really been running concurrently most of my life. So yeah, back in 1990 I basically walked away from the TOUR to start a church. Talk about a man bites dog story, right? I mean my whole life had been trying to get on TOUR, I spent two years on TOUR and kind of fulfilling my dream, and then I got what I thought was a calling and walked away from golf and did that for seven years.

And to be -- if we're going to be honest here, at the time I thought that God really wanted me to invest my life in spirituality and to walk away from golf. In reality, because I just didn't have much spiritual and personal self-awareness at the time, I have a personality type that doesn't do well with failure.

And my two years on TOUR weren't anywhere near what I expected. So looking back I don't think I could handle the failure. And I think a big part of being successful out here is taking your lumps and not losing your confidence and not letting it make you want to run and try to be a star at something else. Because that's what happened.

I got invited to be a part of something where I could be like on the TOUR in spirituality terms, and I ran and went and did that. So I don't think God's calling had anything to do with it at all. It was all ego is what it was.

So, yeah, so I did that for about seven years. And it became clear because I wasn't doing it for the right reasons, that that wasn't where I belong. And so I went back to golf and I got on the WEB.COM TOUR. I had been out of golf for seven years, I got back on the WEB TOUR in about 18 months and played kind of crappy there.

But then I got into teaching and just teaching and playing in the Illinois section and so forth for five, six years. And that's where I played another couple U.S.

Opens and a PGA Championship.

And then in 2007 I kind of retired and went to Florida and now I'm back. So I keep quitting golf and keep coming back. I'm not quitting again, until I'm too damn old to hit it.

Q. I got two questions. First one is, you say you became a relationship coach because of all the mistakes you made in past relationships. Is there any correlation to your recent renaissance in golf to that same thing? Did you make a lot of mistakes early in golf that you're learning from now?

ROY BIANCALANA: Yeah, I mean the mistakes I made in golf was that I wasn't really aware of what was driving me. And so I walked away -- if I had to live my life over again I wouldn't do that -- but I don't have any regrets because I didn't know, I mean I was doing the best I knew how to do at the time. But learning how to -- I mean, I had a pretty good Amateur career. And when I finally got on TOUR, I mean my first event officially as a TOUR player, I think I was tied for 4th with nine holes to play. And I went downhill after that.

So I just didn't know how to deal with the grind of the TOUR and not doing well and being a rookie, I just thought I would come out and I would do well and I would succeed and then right ride off into the sunset. But it didn't work out that way and I didn't know what to do with that.

So does that tie into relationship stuff? Well, just probably it does because ego is what gets in the way of all of the things we do, in my opinion, whether it's relating with someone or doing something in your career. So I don't know if that answers your question.

Q. My second question, kind of off the wall here, but a lot of golfers have like a favorite club in their bag, we have a relationship with our driver or our putter or maybe our 7-iron. Do you have a favorite club in your bag and if so how do all the other clubs feel about that?

ROY BIANCALANA: I have a favorite woman. No one's even close to second. I mean the best club in my bag is normally my driver. I think when I played in the PGA Championship, even though I made the cut I finished toward the bottom, I think I was fifth for the week in driving accuracy.

So I don't hit it very far. But I normally hit it in the fairway. So that's probably my favorite club. Yeah, I mean this is my first-ever Senior event, and I was mentioning earlier driving over here that I was -- I played with Corey Pavin and Kenny Perry today, and I'm walking behind them and I heard them talking about they had surgeries and IVs, and I took a pain pill for

awhile and then I was better and that kind of stuff.

And I just said, that's how you know you're on the Senior TOUR, where the conversation walking down the fairway is about your surgeries and all your old people problems. And I just told them I got all you guys beat. And they said what do you mean? I said I had open heart surgery; I win. And they're like, oh, I guess so.

So in these last 11 years I've had four major surgeries. I had a heart valve replacement. It's currently infected. So right now I'm on eight months of antibiotics. And I'm 50/50 chance of having open heart surgery again in four months.

I had both shoulders, rotator cuffs, the Andrew Luck thing, they're all complaining: Why is it taking him so long? Right? They're a year apiece. So that's a strange thing when you're an independent, self made kind of person. I can't tie my shoes, can't buckle my pants. And then I broke my wrist playing basketball. Yeah, so I'm all pieced together.

Q. I got to ask you, do you give out much advice, relationship advice on the golf course? Do people ask you on the golf course in your foursome or in a tournament at all or anything like that?

ROY BIANCALANA: Well, I would imagine up until now hardly anybody knows, but now they know. Okay? So it would be really hilarious to do that with guys. I would never offer unsolicited advice. That's something -- even a golf instructor, you don't go walk up to someone and say, hey, you need to fix your grip. People have to ask you. But that would be interesting conversations. I'm not the only one who is had some drama in their love life. But, yeah, now I'm sure people will start to ask me that. Thank you very much.

Q. Say I'm having problems in a relationship, how do I find you? And then what is the process for you to make an assessment of what's going on with me and then get into whatever's going to help me get through that situation?

ROY BIANCALANA: What a great question. I get to talk about my business here in front of the whole world. Fantastic. Well, my web site, coachingwithroy.com. If the web site's good, and I think it is, it will answer all those questions. But when people are interested in what I do, I give a free half an hour kind of consultation, let's get to know each other, what's going on in your life, can I help you, do we connect? And if so, then we talk about a coaching program, which is normally a four-month relationship.

I don't do individual sessions. I like to kind of go deep with people and help them make discoveries on why

they are either attracting patterns of relationship difficulties or they're attracting the same kinds of partners over and over again.

So it's a real work on yourself, a real self-discovery thing and that just takes -- it's like if you want to be a better golfer. I mean a half-an-hour lesson ain't going to cut it. You have to commit to a teacher for months and work and practice and you can get better.

I find the same thing in relationships. There's no bandaids, unless you just want to, yeah, some superficial fix; but if you're like, okay, I can't seem to sustain a relationship intimately with someone, then there's something I'm doing, something I'm believing, something I've got, some baggage I'm carrying, something, that is creating those dynamics. And that normally takes more than a half-an-hour lesson to get at that.

THE MODERATOR: So, Roy, your wife takes you to a cocktail party where you don't know anybody and you get the question, so what do you do? What's your answer?

ROY BIANCALANA: I help people discover why they have drama in their life and how to get out of it, if I'm talking about that. If I'm talking about golf it's a whole different story.

But, yeah, I mean that's what I do. My work is mostly with people that are single that don't want to be. Because that's, a lot of my learning and my personal growth came from my divorce and then I did a rebound relationship which, by the way, those don't work. I got engaged and then she dumped me and it broke my heart. Oh, it's a great line. I've written two books, one of them is a memoir that, kind of my life before I sort of woke up, and then my life after and then all the -- use nice words -- all the nice, the stuff I did in between. So I help people figure out why their love lives are stuck and what they're doing to create that.

Q. I wondered --

ROY BIANCALANA: I could give you guys cards if you need them. I'm sure all you guys are just doing great.

Q. I wondered who is on the bag for you this week and given the list of health issues you just mentioned wondered if it shouldn't be a paramedic or something like that.

ROY BIANCALANA: Yeah, right. No, I feel great physically. I got some weird infection. They don't know where it came from. The doctors were asking me all kind of weird questions like, have you had sex with farm animals or something or how did you get your heart valve infected. No was the answer to that question, just want to be clear, since we're being

reported. So no, physically I feel good, it's just when I finish these antibiotics, if I start getting flu-like symptoms in about four months that means means it's just not knocked out and then they're going to have to like replace it. So what was the first part of the question?

Q. Your caddie.

ROY BIANCALANA: Oh, my caddie, well, when I did my start a church phase from '90 to '97, my training was in a big church in Chicago, Willow Creek Community Church, and I went down to St. Louis to start a church and he was one of the people in the original core group that we were, that were involved in starting that church. So I've been friends with Mark since about 1991 or '92. And now we're just golf buddies and he's a big sports freak and so pretty much whenever I qualify for something where I need a good caddie, I bring Mark with me.

Q. What are your expectations this week?

ROY BIANCALANA: My expectations are probably lower, and maybe that's a good thing, than they have ever been before. Not that I don't feel like I can play and hit the shots, but I also recognize that -- I mean, everyone's talking about Tiger Woods and he's been gone for a year, wow, it's going to take him some time. Well it's 11 years for me. So making the cut would be really good. Top-25 would be phenomenal. That would be great. So, yeah, because I'm just not competitively conditioned. I can feel it. I'm more nervous than usual, there's a physical conditioning and there's a mechanical conditioning in golf and then there's a competitive, being comfortable in the environment that I've never not had that, because I've always been competing my whole life. But now being gone and coming back, it's like, oh, so I'm kind of re-learning things. So my expectations are not the same as they might have been when I played in the 2004 PGA. I probably expected to finish in the Top-20 there. I didn't, but that's just because I didn't make putts.

THE MODERATOR: When you arrived on property was this the first time you had come to the Broadmoor?

ROY BIANCALANA: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: You hadn't played in the Broadmoor Invitational as an amateur or anything like that?

ROY BIANCALANA: No, no. This course is hard, people. I mean, it's not that demanding off the tee in the sense the tee shots aren't -- it's right in front of you. The rough is not high, but it's thick. So you don't want to be in the rough. But your iron shots have got to be on the right parts of the greens because putting these things is a nightmare. Everything breaks away from

the mountain. And so there's going to be a lot of 3-putting going on this week, if you don't get the ball near the hole or on the right section. So -- and they're fast. And so it's going to test your game, which is what the USGA wants. I imagine even par's going to be a pretty good score by the time the week's over.

Q. Without getting a specific details or private details was there anyone ever came to you and you just threw up your hands and said, I'm not going to be able to help this one, or was there something that just even surprised you that this person had issues with relationship-wise?

ROY BIANCALANA: Right, so I do get that question from people who are potentially wanting to work with me, what are your results and successes, and here's what I'll say: What I do is a little bit like a personal trainer at a gym. It's not dependent on the trainer, it's is the person willing to do the work. So when someone comes to me, if they are, if they are willing to take responsibility for what's happening and not blame anybody for their love life, it's like it's happening by you, not to you, if you're in that mindset, a hundred percent success rate. But I have worked with people who want to maintain that it's their ex's fault or it's the way they were raised or it's their someone who betrayed them or lied to them and they assign blame to something else and they're not willing to own their part. When they're in that state of victim consciousness, then I can't help, but that's not because I'm lacking, it's because they're not in a place where they're willing to learn from their experience.

Q. Does your wife golf and how does your relationship fare during golf season?

ROY BIANCALANA: That's really interesting. She doesn't. She's not an athletic type, so -- and the funny thing is, she -- I met my wife in 2006 -- got to be careful here now. Yeah, I met her in 2006 -- and we were together for about a year and we got married. So she only knows Roy the golfer from stories, she's never seen it. She's never watched me play. She doesn't know golf terminology. She doesn't know where to stand. She doesn't know what a par is. So I've been so out of golf for 11 years that I haven't played, I haven't competed, so she knows nothing about the game. So I think the funnest thing this week is to have her come out here and see this weird sub culture there is around golf. If you're not familiar with it, it's like, why are all these people volunteering, and there's so many volunteers, they do such an amazing job and the grandstands. And so she's just been like, oh, now I get why people talk about you like you used to be good. So it's been kind of an eye opening thing for her. And then for me, I should have brought her here today but I didn't for one reason, you guys would have wanted to ask her a question and she would have no part of that.

She doesn't want this side of the microphone. But, right, this whole thing, like she's like, you're famous. I'm like, it's about time, baby. Come on. Give me some love.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for Roy? Roy, thanks so much for your glib answers and your great story. Good luck.

ROY BIANCALANA: I hope I see you again.

THE MODERATOR: We hope we see you often.