

# U.S. Senior Open

Flash Interview

Friday June 30, 2017

## Tom Watson

TOM WATSON: How did it go out there today? Well, I shot 69. I hit a few good shots close. Best shot of the day was 18. I hit a 5 iron from the right side of the fairway there to about 2 feet, and that tough green right there. So that's two birdies in two days. I'm kind of happy with the way I've been playing 18.

### Q. What do you think of this course?

TOM WATSON: It's a very, very challenging golf course. It gives you quite a bit of room off the tees, but the greens are what makes it tough. Right now, the greens are a little softer, and that's the reason the scores are being shot the way they are.

But get them a little firmer and -- there are some flag positions there they can hide pretty, pretty treacherously.

### Q. Do you feel like you're getting a little youth back, Tom? You'll make the cut. You'll be in the mix in some form or fashion.

TOM WATSON: You never get your youth back.

### Q. Even mentally?

TOM WATSON: No, you never get it back. Actually, I made an adjustment in my swing at the end of Wednesday's practice rounds, as we always do, and started hitting the ball better out of the rough. I have better descending blow on the ball, and, boy, it helped with the other parts of my swing too.

### Q. The feedback you get, the numbers you're shooting, what Hale is doing, shooting his age, what Bernhard is doing almost at 60, what kind of feel do you get for inspiring people?

TOM WATSON: Well, if you keep yourself in decent shape, you can play well into your 60s, I think. I don't think there's too much, if you can keep your putting touch. That's the main thing. That's how people win golf tournaments. That's how I won golf tournaments. I made everything and didn't hit -- and didn't hit all the greens in regulation.

But, boy, I could putt, get the ball up and down. I was strong, hit the ball high and long. I'm one of the shorter hitters now out here.

### Q. Struggled with your putting early in your round yesterday. Did you make some adjustments there



**too, and are you kind of proud of yourself that you stuck with it?**

TOM WATSON: I didn't really make many adjustments. I made just one, just trying to keep the putter head a little lower on the takeaway. So didn't do too much adjusting. Just that -- just tried to take it a little bit lower. I didn't make anything today that -- hit it close a couple times for birdies, kick-in birdies. That's always fun. That's always good.

### Q. Everyone has their elements out here, but how amazing is it what Fred Couples does out here with his bad back?

TOM WATSON: Well, it's -- again, I've never had a bad back so I can't really address it. But I know Mark Calcavecchia is struggling with his back. I played with him these last two days. It's awfully tough to play when your back is not -- you never know when that pain's going to go whap and get you. It's not easy. Not easy at all. In fact, it's really tough to do.

### Q. He still has game, still has a lot of game.

TOM WATSON: Freddy, yeah. Darn right. Look what he does every year at the Masters. I mean, he just -- I mean, it's an annuity for him.

### Q. Am I late asking about the soccer ball?

TOM WATSON: You're not late. Soccer ball. Callaway came out with that ball beginning of last year, 2016. I signed with them, and they obviously wanted me to play with their ball as well as all their equipment. I love their equipment. So I tested the ball out, and they said, yeah, we're making this ball with a soccer pattern.

I said, let me try it. So I started using it and good, hey, cool. I have no problem with it. In fact, you can actually see, in the rare occasion I hit a ball with the proper spin or the proper roll of the putt, you can really see the beautiful rotation of the ball going backwards with the backspin and going like this with the putt.

If you hit it with a little bit of side spin, you can see it. You can see it. You know you hit a crappy shot or a crappy putt.

### Q. You can always tell it's your ball on the green too.

TOM WATSON: Yeah, yeah. One of the great things about it is they increased their ball share about 2



... when all is said, we're done®

percent with that ball pattern. They ran out of red paint.

**Q. Pretty cool.**

TOM WATSON: Yeah. So they like it a lot. My bosses at Callaway like it a lot.

**Q. Does the soccer ball give you more kick-ins?**

TOM WATSON: Come on! I toe it too many times. I'm old school.

**Q. Tom, two months short of your 68th birthday, how satisfying is it to make the cut in this Major tournament?**

TOM WATSON: After missing the cut at the Senior PGA and playing cruddy there, I wasn't playing very well coming into here. But the adjustment I made on Wednesday gave me some hope and, sure enough, I played pretty well. I played okay. I kept the ball in play. I hit some quality iron shots but still not very consistent.

**Q. You may not remember this, but in '01, I interviewed you when you said -- I speculated down the road, and you said I can't see myself playing into my 70s. Do you still feel that way?**

TOM WATSON: Well, probably not. I mean, I'm 67. Three more years. I'm seeing -- in the last three years, I've seen my distance start to diminish. When your distance diminishes, that puts you behind the eight-ball.

If you can't keep it out there and hit the types of -- hit the right iron shots into the greens, if I'm going in there with lower trajectory shots into the greens, I'm going to have a problem. And I am.

**Q. What was the adjustment you made?**

TOM WATSON: I just got my hands a little farther ahead at address. I got my right elbow, instead of out, got it a little bit more under this way. Feels like going I'm to hit it straight right, but it goes pretty straight most of the time.

**Q. Tom, as that career winds down, do you enjoy the galleries following you?**

TOM WATSON: I love the galleries here. Every time we play at a U.S. Senior Open, we have the biggest galleries of the year. It's great playing in front of a lot of people. It's terrific.

Showing them some pretty good golf. 62 yesterday and 63 and -- you know, yeah, that's some quality golf, real solid golf. We're showing the gallery some golf.

**Q. Is part of the beauty of this game that in your mid-60s, the search never quite ends?**

TOM WATSON: Yeah, it did. My friend, Sandy Tatum,

who just passed, it was always the search for the holy grail. You're always trying to find the right way to do it, and when you grab on to it, you hold on to it as long as it works for you, and when it leaves you, you have to find something else.

That's what we do out here. That's what you do when you play. That's what you do when you play. Everybody.