

Viking Classic
Annandale Golf Club
Madison, MS

October 31, 2009

First-round quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH SLUGGER WHITE AND RANDY WATKINS

THE MODERATOR: I would like to welcome Slugger White and Randy Watkins from the Viking Classic on my left. Slugger, if you start off and make comments about where we stand with the Viking Classic and we'll take some questions.

SLUGGER WHITE: Thanks, Mark. Well, unfortunately we didn't do as good as we thought we were going to do last night. We got about an inch and three quarters of rain out there. Our staff went out to assess exactly what we were afraid was going to happen and it got worse, as you can imagine.

I was almost embarrassed because I was walking tracks on the golf course this morning.

We have an unplayable situation, in talking with Al Olstein, the golf course superintendent, who I might say has done a fantastic job, my hat goes off to him and his crew. They've been tirelessly working their tails off out there.

In Al's best judgment with what we received last night, and all during this week, as far as rainfall, he would not see this golf course drying up probably until the latter part of next week, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to where it would be almost back to where we were yesterday when we were unplayable.

It's sad. I know you people in Mississippi, my heart goes out to you. It's a special place for me. It's a special place in my heart for you.

And to Randy, and his staff it's been, the hospitality has been wonderful. We've done every single thing we could possibly do to try to get this golf tournament in.

We went as far as to have Commissioner Finchem go to the board to get approval that he could his authority to basically override the regulations so we could try to get 36 holes in by Tuesday, maybe play Monday and Tuesday. But unfortunately it's impossible at this time and we have canceled the event.

THE MODERATOR: If you have a question, please use the mic.

Q. Slugger, what's the regulation he would have had to override, is that you couldn't go into Tuesday unless it was 72 holes?

SLUGGER WHITE: It's a regulation, Dave, that goes to if we got half the field finished, and we are trying to play 72 holes, then we could play 54 holes. We could go into Tuesday if we got half the field finished. He was contacting all of the board members again to use his authority to override that.

If we could get 36 holes in, would be an official vent, it wouldn't have been an official win, but it would have been official money and that's the unfortunate part, we couldn't get there.

Q. So does this mean there won't be another tournament for the players besides Disney? There is nothing else you guys can do between now and the end of the year.

SLUGGER WHITE: That's correct.

Q. I'm not sure if it's Randy, or you, if could talk about, what happens, you have a purse, does the money go back into a pot, go toward next year? If you could speak to some of logistics of that and what this means for the tournament financially?

RANDY WATKINS: Well, I can speak to that. A policy is in place. What would happen, even if the tournament was played, once all of the expenses and all of the expenditures relating to the tournament are figured out, we will do what's equitable. I have not been through this before. There are policies and procedures in place which we will follow. That will take a couple of weeks to get that settled.

Q. Just to follow up on that, the purse, \$3.5 million, Viking just retains that money, do they not?

RANDY WATKINS: \$3.6, that money has already been placed with The TOUR. We had to wire that money well in advance of the event. We are working with The TOUR now. We have started that process. It will take probably two weeks to work through all of the logistics of that.

Q. I think you addressed this yesterday, but if you could reiterate the possibility of moving to another course to play an event and the logistics that would be involved. Some people have asked me that, why don't they just move it somewhere else? Talk about what it would take to do that and why you can't do that?

SLUGGER WHITE: Well, I think the infrastructure that's here right now, Randy's hospitality, we have roping issues out there. I could never see us doing something like that unless I've got my head in the sand, I wouldn't even think we would even consider something like that.

Q. What has been the opinion of the players and the reaction, I don't know if you have told folks yet.

SLUGGER WHITE: There was a text just sent to the players probably just before Randy and I walked in here. I think the reaction was they knew. They kind of knew what was going on because they were out there on Tuesday and some Wednesday when it was marginal at best on Wednesday. And I think Randy's probably talked to more of the players than I have. And I think that their response has been, they understand. It's unfortunate. But I think they do understand.

RANDY WATKINS: If you don't mind me addressing that for just a second, the players have not just been understanding of our situation, they've been gracious and they've been helpful. They have gone above and beyond normal to deal with our sponsors, our fans. It's a tough week for those guys, too. They want to go to work. Some of them, they want to go home and see their wives and kids and they stayed around for us. Again, it's one of the benefits of being affiliated with the PGA TOUR and the quality of the men that play this game for a living. There is a lot of them on the grounds right now doing things for us that they asked and offered to do. It is not something that we asked of them. They've come to us and offered, to deal with our sponsors. They are trying now to get some food with Tyler Florence. I don't blame, it's pretty good stuff. This has been an amazing week with the players. It's been very eye opening for me that the players, and it just not the ones that are personal friends of mine, these are guys that I don't even know, to stay and be a part of the stuff other than golf to help us. You just don't see that in any other sports, or any other business. These guys are good guys.

SLUGGER WHITE: Two quick notes. Richie Fowler and Jamie Lovemark who both last to Troy Matteson Top-10 at the Fry's will be able to use those Top-10's next week at the Children's American Network. They will need to both commit before this Friday to assure that. And the Kodak Challenge which is 30 holes throughout the season, there is no announcement. Kodak is committed to holding 30 holes. They are going to have a release on Monday and will announce what their plans are once they get to Disney, and that will be coming Monday from Steve Powell.

Q. There were a lot of players that were going to play into this tournament because their player card is on the line, will a lot of them have an opportunity to make sure they can keep their card now?

SLUGGER WHITE: It's wherever they fall in the pecking order. We have set a lot of categories. We have a limited field at Disney. I think it's 128 man field. It's a little bit less. But that's their opportunity right there.

Q. Randy, I know one of the big things is the charities, what affect will this have on the charities?

RANDY WATKINS: I hope very little. We don't anticipate any problems. We are going to make significant contributions to charities that we do every year. That's the mission of our event. Central Club Charities, the people I answer through, that's what they asked us to do. That's what they ask of all of us, along with all of our sponsors.

Q. Randy, forget about the golf and cancellation, can you talk about how this week, how happy are you with the result of the cooking event?

RANDY WATKINS: I'm thrilled. I put on a couple of pounds this week from the food. This is a special week for us with a lot of delays. You could see professional golf. We don't get to see much of it this week. You also get to see professional cooking and the talents of people like Tyler Florence. I don't get to see them. They are professionals just like the players are. So every single event that Viking has hosted, it's been standing room only at every single event. (Inaudible.) We will have fun and enjoy. It's packed. I just left the tent down there now. It's standing room only. And those 8 or 10 players are trying to get a spot to meet Tyler Florence. I met him back stage, he is cool.

Q. It's been about 15 years or so since the last tournament was canceled because of weather conditions, how difficult was it for you to come to this conclusion?

SLUGGER WHITE: I wasn't involved in the one in Houston in '91. But again we tried every single thing we could possibly do to try to play golf. It's just become impossible. We've got safety issues out there with spectators. We have got safety issues with caddies walking up and down hills, players. The setting is not there. If you haven't been out there, you can't appreciate it. I don't remember seeing devastation like this. What did you say FEMA should be here?

RANDY WATKINS: Yes, I told them this is more closer to a FEMA disaster site. Somebody asked if you could play somewhere else. I don't think you could play golf within 150 miles of here. I don't think you can find a driving range in this kind of competition, a professional competition with the standards that they require and that that they demand and that the players expect. You couldn't do that within 150 miles within Madison, Mississippi based on the weather we've had the last couple of months.

I can tell you for sure, some golf courses that belong to me that I would love to hold this competition on, my golf course wouldn't be more playable than this one is. With this golf course would be an error. You could not find one within 150 miles where we are sitting to hold this kind of competition, with this amount of talent and this much on the line. That all goes into their decision-making process.

Q. Randy, the tournament was pushed back later in the year this year, will you try to go back where it was last year as far as considering dates?

RANDY WATKINS: We had a date for 2010 right now. But it's opposite The Ryder Cup. That's been the date since we signed the contract. I have now formally asked for our date again to be considered for an unencumbered date for 2010. That decision will take some time to work out. We were honored and grateful to have our own date for the first time in our history. Unfortunate circumstances prevented us from playing this year. I asked that they would consider that greatly. And I hope they answer that some time in the near future.

Q. Randy, you talked about other events going on, cooking demonstration, what about the rest of today with hospitality, what's the schedule?

RANDY WATKINS: The schedule is on as posted. Family day is on. Kids were doing face painting. They had the clown and it was packed in there. The shows are open. Eagle's Nests are open. We are open for business. We are entertaining and having a good time. This is not a funeral. We have had a tough week. It's affected a lot of people, but the big picture is we try to keep the eye on it, we did our very best within lockstep of the PGA TOUR to provide a competition with the best golfers of the world. Circumstances beyond everybody's control prevented that from happening. It does not prevent us from doing what we do, which is to raise money for charities, the image of Mississippi, entertain people from Viking, all the other sponsors, that will not prevent one thing from that happening.

Q. (Inaudible)?

SLUGGER WHITE: Yes, all of the cooking shows are on for tomorrow. We got great stuff coming in tomorrow. That's 11 and 1. Don't miss tomorrow. It's sort of like the players coming to play town. We get these players once a year too. 12 and 2. Noon and 2 o'clock tomorrow. It's the same thing. There is a lot of people with food stands. We like to eat. So tomorrow, our part of the show goes on.

SLUGGER WHITE: Just real quick on half of PGA TOUR, we thank you and Viking for being involved here. Wonderful, wonderful sponsors and hopefully we can go forward from here, and you can appreciate our efforts.

But we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you.

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