

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
August 24, 2018



FRED COUPLES (-1)

FRED COUPLES: I play a lot of the holes solid. I just butcher some of the holes that make the round go from a 68 or 9 to a 70 or 71 and, I do it every year.

Q. With that in mind, though, Fred, are you going to take one out, 17 out, and feel like you can have that momentum rolling into Saturday here? I know you can't take --

FRED COUPLES: First of all, I don't play enough, but I really practiced hard and I was actually hitting the ball pretty sharp. I have a new driver. The one I used at the British broke, so this is the first round I've really used it in competition. But I've been driving it really well with it. So I was mediocre with it and I think -- you know, Darren was driving it so much further than I was, so I started to get a little complex that maybe this club, I'm not hitting -- I was smoking it and not hitting it that far. So then a couple -- I swung harder and I started to hit a little better, which is odd. But the back nine I was in play, made a lot of birdies, and the front nine was just pretty mediocre.

Q. On 17 there, did you consider shooting from the water?

FRED COUPLES: You know, John walked up there and said it's hittable, but I don't really usually go and take my shoes off and splash it out of there. But, you know, if it was Sunday, maybe, but today it just didn't seem like -- he said it's 50/50 that you could get it up on the -- maybe I could have hacked it out of there. But as it turned out, I still had a nice little par putt, or bogey putt. That's not a good shot. I mean, there's no one going to hit it there in the water all day, it's almost laughable.

Q. Seems like I've been asking you this for 25 years, but every time you come back you get young kids out here and you are Mr. Northwest. It's got to feel good to get back in the area once in a while?

FRED COUPLES: No, I love it, I really do. I'm not here much. You know, the greatest event ever for me is the Boeing Classic, and then obviously to play in the U.S. Senior Open at Sahalee my first year on Tour. You know, the funny thing is I really like the golf -- there are some hard holes on the golf course and I play them really, really well. I love -- a lot of people don't like the third and fourth holes. Hopefully, I don't make 10s on them tomorrow, but I get through those really well. I never -- I get some momentum and then I just -- it all goes away. And then the next thing you know, even on a good round if I could get to 7 under or 5 under or whatever, I usually shoot 4 under.

So I love playing up here, I like the course. I just need to clean up some bad swings. The best players aren't doing that, they're getting it around. I putted pretty well. I mean, I didn't

putt badly to shoot what I shot, but I did have five birdies on the back. Maybe I'll start on the back tomorrow, I'll start on 10. I don't know where I'm sitting, but if it's close, I'll tell Brian, put me on the back first.

Q. How do you feel physically compared to when you usually come out here?

FRED COUPLES: Oh, I feel good. I don't -- it's hard to play -- at Augusta I didn't feel very good at all and I played. I probably wouldn't do that here, there's no way. But I feel good. I'm going to play and that's just part of it. I mean, I wouldn't be here if I couldn't swing and play pretty good golf because it's a -- I could come to Seattle and do other things than come up here and shoot 74 or 5, which I still can do. But I felt pretty good and hitting the ball well, I just don't score where I want to score. And when you don't do that in the first round on the Champions Tour, you're really in trouble because if you look at the board, everybody's 5, 6, a few 7s. Hell, I could shoot 5 under tomorrow and lose ground on the top three, four or five players. I'll pick up ground, but I just want to come out and play well and then get some momentum. Like I say, I'm going to play two or three more times this year, but I enjoy coming back here. It's my favorite event.