

# Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS Championship

Wednesday, July 11, 2018

## Scott McCarron

### Press Conference

LAURA VESCOVI: Good morning, Scott. Thank you for joining us this week. We are glad to have you here, and before I get started talking about Exmoor and this week's competition, I wanted to take a look back at 2017. You had a really impressive season. I know you set a lot of goals for yourself that you earned, but let's go back to 2017 at Caves Valley. You had a win under your belt at the time. It was your first major championship. We all thought, I think, Bernhard Langer was going to take his fourth consecutive, but you took that away with your victory, so take us back to that day.

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, obviously to win your first major out here, it felt great. It was something I've been wanting to do. I never got an opportunity to win a major on the regular tour. I had a few opportunities and just didn't quite fall my way on the last day, so my goal is to come out here and win as many tournaments as I can, especially majors. It's a big deal. These majors are a big deal for us, and it was fun to get my first one there, and to go against Bernhard Langer and my college roommate Brandt Jobe coming down the stretch was a lot of fun.

It was an interesting week in that my caddie Rich Mayo got a call on Tuesday that his father had gotten ill and went to the hospital, and so I sent him home, and he tried to get back there, and unfortunately his father passed away before he was able to get back home.

Bud was with me all week. His dad, Bud, was a great guy, and I loved watching Rich and I golf and compete and would scream and yell at the TV all the time, so kind of felt his presence all week long.

But it was an interesting thing; I took a local caddie Evan Vollerthum, who caddies at Caves Valley and Bel Air Country Club, and he caddied with me for Wednesday. My wife was going to caddie for me, but she had a golf game on Wednesday and couldn't quite make the Wednesday pro-am. So I hired Evan for the day to see how he would do, and by about the fourth hole I knew that this is the guy I was going to take for the week. He was very knowledgeable, great guy, and really helped me around Caves Valley kind of learning that golf course and the little nuances of the greens.



It ended up being kind of a blessing.

LAURA VESCOVI: So Rich is back with you now?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yes.

LAURA VESCOVI: You had a victory not too long ago at the American Family Insurance Championship. How has the season been going for you so far?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, it's been a little bit of a mixed bag. I've got seven top 10s. I've had some opportunities. I fished second at Newport. I had a nice finish in our first two majors, Tradition -- the Regions and the PGA, fifth and a third. I had a putter break early in the season, airline travel, and the putters that TaylorMade makes for me are special, so it was tough to get one made with a center post shaft, and it took a while, and so I was struggling there for a couple months trying to figure out putters and weights and all this stuff, and I finally actually went and bought a gram machine myself. Because my putters are longer at 48 inches, no one out here can weigh them for grams, so I'm trying to get the overall gram weight the same. So I actually had to go buy my own gram weight machine that goes to 1,500 grams. I'm sure the DA is probably going to be looking at me now going, why would this guy need a gram machine. But it's for the putter, and I actually -- so I've got all these putters and they were all different weights and different lengths, so I had to get it down to where it was -- my gamer.

I finally got it figured out, but it wasn't until I bought that machine that I was able to do it myself because no one else, no one in the trailers, no one at home in club fitting has a gram weight machine that goes up high enough to weight these putters. I got it figured out the week before the Am Fam Championship and putted beautifully there and came off with a nice win.

LAURA VESCOVI: Looking ahead to this week at Exmoor, we've had some incredible courses played for the Constellation Senior Players, Philly Cricket Club, Caves Valley. Now we're at Exmoor. What are your initial thoughts on the course? I know you're going out today to play your pro-am. Do you have any initial feelings about it?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, I'll tell you what, I love old-

school style golf courses, and this certainly is one. You know, it's out there in front of you, but the Donald Ross makes it very tricky around the greens. The greens are sloping and back to front, and you've got to stay below the hole. Any time you get above the hole here, you've got a very difficult two-putt.

Again, it's a strategy-type golf course. You've got to put yourself in the right position. I love the way he does his bunkering. You're looking out there and you can see where the trouble is. It's right in front of you, it's not hidden, and you've got to be able to avoid it, and it's a good golf course. The fairways are fairly generous off the tee, but again, there's spots where you can't hit it, and if you hit it in a spot, you're going to definitely have a tough time making par. So it's a golf course that I really enjoy just -- I played nine holes on Monday when I came in, I played nine holes yesterday afternoon and really enjoyed it.

**Q. Did your putter break in transit?**

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, it did. Broke with the airlines. So I travel with it, I put it upside down in my golf bag, and I've got this PVC pipe that sits over the top of it that's about that much higher than the shaft, and so when that's on, then that's the first thing that hits in the bag and it's fine, but the TSA guys constantly take the PVC pipe off and then just take the putter out and then put it back normal. So now I've got to written an there, please place back on putter. Hopefully they will. But it was just one of those things, and it's happened before.

**Q. You say you were trying out a bunch of long ones. That would be almost impossible --**

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, obviously nobody makes really long putters much anymore. Hopefully they will. But TaylorMade actually made this one special for me about 10 years ago, and it's not -- I've got a couple backups but they weren't quite right, so it's not real easy to get a new one. They're not making a lot of money making long putters, obviously, and I'm about the only one that uses that putter, that specific putter, so it was difficult to get one, but I finally got one and figured it out, but it took a while.

**Q. Defending a tournament title at a different golf course, is that beneficial? I don't think you ever did that in your PGA TOUR wins between Atlanta and New Orleans because Atlanta switched there at some point --**

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, but I won Atlanta the first year we were at Sugarloaf. You know, it's different. It's a little different feel because when you're coming back to defend, you're usually coming back to defend at the golf course you won at, so you have a lot of good feelings. Coming here, I have no feelings. Yes, I won

last year, but it's a completely different golf course, so it almost feels like a different tournament.

The only thing that reminds me of defending is when I drive in and my picture is first coming into the parking lot. I mean, that's it. Other than that, this feels like another major tournament and not one that I'm actually defending.

**Q. Is that beneficial so that you don't go out there and start thinking about shots you hit last year, or I birdied this hole --**

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, I think if you're defending at a golf course you've won at, you have good feelings. You know you've played well there. I think that's beneficial. Coming here is just coming here and it's just like another tournament in that nobody has really seen this golf course. Everybody is back to square one. So there's really no advantage for being the defending champion, other than I'm playing at 12:00 today in the pro-am. That's it.

**Q. We've had six different major winners in the last six majors. Do you think that's a sign of the depth that there is out here on Tour?**

SCOTT McCARRON: Oh, absolutely. I mean, there's so many guys that can win tournaments out here, and these guys are so good. That's what I was so impressed with three years ago when I first came out, how good these guys are playing, how much they're still practicing, how much they still want to compete. Very impressive to me.

We've got 78 guys. It seems like 70 of them can win week in, week out, which is great, and it's good for our Tour to have that.

Now, Bernhard Langer has won a lot of events since I've got on this Tour, and I've been fortunate to win quite a few, too. And it's fun, but he's kind of been our guy to beat. Now we've got some younger guys coming out: Steve Stricker, Jerry Kelly. These guys are very competitive, and when they get in the hunt, they're going to be very difficult to beat. And it's just going to keep doing that for the next couple years. We've got Chris DiMarco coming out, and we've got some really good players that will be very competitive out here, and so it's fun. You've got to get it while you can.

Everybody said you try to make your money in the first five years. Well, I think Langer has dispelled that theory. If you can stay in shape and you still have a passion for it and you still want to compete, there's no reason why you can't be competitive into your 60s, and that's certainly one of my goals is to be out here as long as I can and competing.

**Q. Winning last year, you got to play in THE PLAYERS Championship at Sawgrass. What was that experience like?**

SCOTT McCARRON: It was great going back there. I built it up -- I was really excited to go back there, and I was excited to go back and compete. It wasn't a golf course or a tournament that I played really well at throughout my career. I always struggled there at THE PLAYERS Championship. And so I think I might have put a little more added pressure to do well to support the Champions Tour. I got so many guys out here that texted me before the week, saying we're rooting for you and all that stuff, so I think I might have taken on some of that added pressure. I wanted to perform well and I didn't, so it was a little disappointing.

But having said that, I want to do it again. I got a taste for it to get back out there and see the young guys, and that is such a dramatic stage. I think it's really one of the biggest tournaments in the world and the biggest stages in the world, so I want to be able to try again, so the only way to get there is to win this tournament.

**Q. Is that a little extra hook for you guys in the field this week?**

SCOTT McCARRON: Absolutely. I mean, that's what's really cool about our majors, THE PLAYERS Championship, the PGA, the U.S. Open and the Senior, or the Open Championship. You get to play with the young guys if you win. I mean, that's a really big incentive. We love challenging ourselves, even though we're 50, against the young guys, to kind of show these young guys that we can still play. I get to play a lot with some of the young guys when I'm at home in Charlotte, and I can still compete with them, and so that's fun.

Again, age is just a number. I remember playing when I first came out here with Tom Watson, in his 60s, and I mean, this guy could still flat-out play golf, and I think that's pretty cool that we're able to do that with some of the young guys.

**Q. When you came out a few years ago; did you have any anticipation of it's more casual, a little bit more casual out here? Did you have any anticipation about what the level of competition would be like?**

SCOTT McCARRON: You know, it's funny; before I came out, I played like 10 or 12 Web.com events and I was still doing some TV work, and I was talking to a lot of my buddies that were on the Champions Tour, and they were saying, you're going to love it, nobody practices. We're taking carts in practice rounds. It's really casual. You go have a beer after the round. I got out here, and the practice range is loaded from sunup

to sundown. These guys are practicing harder than ever. Everybody is working out, everybody was in the trailer working out. Guys are eating right. I mean, it was completely opposite of what these guys have been telling me. I think they were just goading me the whole time.

When I got out here, I thought, oh, it'll be just kind of fun, this and that. I mean, these guys go low right from the get-go. With only three days and no cut, they're trying to birdie the first hole on Friday. And so that was really impressive to me how low they still shoot, and I say if you took PGA TOUR players, played our same courses, same tees, three days, the winning score wouldn't be much different. Now, there probably would be more guys in the top 10. I mean, they would have 50 guys in the top 10, but the winning scores wouldn't be much different.

**Q. You talk to guys on the Web, they say the approach there is a lot different than it is on TOUR because you have to make so many birdies to get your card eventually.**

SCOTT McCARRON: Right, right.

**Q. I would guess it's kind of probably the same way with the seniors, isn't it?**

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, I think so. You look at these guys and what they're shooting week in and week out, they're going low. Our winning scores are 15- to 20-under it seems like just about every week. That's going low every day.

It's very difficult to win out here having just a mediocre day shooting even par or 1-under. You've really got to go low every single day, and if you do shoot even par or 1-under, you'd better shoot 61 or 62 to kind of back that up. The level of competition here is really intense. It's good.

**Q. Who are some of the young guys you play with in Charlotte, and is there anything you learn from them as you practice with them?**

SCOTT McCARRON: I play a lot of golf with Kyle Reifers, who played on the TOUR for quite a few years, and he's playing on the Web.com right now. He's 73rd. You know, it's funny, I don't know if I'm learning from them, but I think he's learning through me. I was very fortunate I had some guys that have been out here on the Tour for a while to kind of take me under their wing; Greg Norman, Mark O'Meara, John Cook were guys that when I first got on TOUR, I played a lot of practice rounds with, went to dinner. I learned a lot from these guys.

So I kind of feel like it's my time to give back a little bit to Kyle and some of these other young guys that I've

been playing with. It's fun for me to give some information because I have been around a long time, and I'm starting -- and I'm having some success out here on the Champions Tour, and it's no different winning out here than winning on the PGA TOUR or winning your club championship. Whatever it may be. Winning, you still have the same feelings, and it's getting used to that, being in the hunt, manage your emotions no matter what level you are. It's all basically the same. So I'm trying to bestow some of that that I've learned over the last three or four years to some of these guys.

**Q. Going back to last year, have you kept in touch with Evan, your caddie?**

SCOTT McCARRON: I have. As a matter of fact, Evan was the first guy that wished me a happy birthday yesterday. I do. Evan caddied out here for a little bit after, and that kind of set Evan up. I paid him full boat just like I would a regular caddie. Even though he was a local caddie, I paid him a full bang, so that was the most money he's ever made, and it set him up to pursue -- because he wants to be a TOUR caddie. So he was able to quit some of the other stuff that he was doing and really pursue that, which was great. That win I felt really helped him to maybe reach his goals, and so he's trying to caddie for a guy on the Web right now and trying to get on the PGA TOUR, which hopefully he'll do that. We do keep in contact.

**Q. Who is he caddying for?**

SCOTT McCARRON: I forget. He just picked up another bag like two weeks ago, and I forget the guy's name on the Web.

**Q. You mentioned your birthday was yesterday. How did you celebrate?**

SCOTT McCARRON: I celebrated, let's see, by going to Astellas and meeting a bunch of the volunteers for this tournament over at their corporate headquarters, played nine holes with Mike Small and Rod Spittle, and my golf coach EA Tischler was up watching me play nine holes, and my wife and I went out to a nice little dinner at Scott's Bar and Grill, just down the road, Scottie's. It was fantastic. We had a nice little evening.