

January 13, 2018



An Interview With:

MARK MULDER

MARK MULDER: Did you happen to see my thin ball into the water on 17?

Q. I thought they say thin to win.

MARK MULDER: I'd like to think it, but, man I left the -- I had a little drainage thing there. It wasn't in my way, but I let it right there.

Q. It was in the way here.

MARK MULDER: Yeah, the stance was a little awkward, and I let it get to me. Stupid, uncalled for. It happens. What are you going to do? That's why I'm not a pro.

Q. Yes, but you're defending champ.

MARK MULDER: I am, but --

Q. First, what was it like coming to a place now as the defending champion? What's that feel like for you?

MARK MULDER: There's some pressure there, but I think my son puts more pressure on me to win this tournament than anybody else. My kids think these are just things Dad comes to and wins, you know?

Q. So did you win, Daddy?

MARK MULDER: He just thinks every shot should be five feet. You should birdie every hole. Listen, son, this isn't what your dad does. This is what your dad does for fun, all right? And today was a grind with this weather, the wind. It was tough out there.

Q. This is -- weather like this is why you don't want to be a pro golfer. Oh, yeah, they got to play in this too.

MARK MULDER: That's no good because then you get somebody who tees off early and they

get no wind, and they shoot a 62 -- well, it's not happening in this tournament, but the point is, if somebody throws up a big number and you're playing in the downpour, in the wind, like we were yesterday.

Q. What was the best part of your game today?

MARK MULDER: Probably my putting. I hit my tee ball okay, but I saved myself a few times with some good putts. I made a great birdie on 15, par saver on 17, par saver on 18. Kind of saved my round a little bit. Got me to tomorrow, which is all I need. I just want to be in the final group or two tomorrow.

Q. So now that's the thing -- defending champ, but in a position to defend the title literally. How much pressure, nerves? What are you going to be feeling? What do you think is going to be similar to what you felt on the baseball field?

MARK MULDER: It's not similar. I was so confident on the baseball field. There could have been a million people in the stadium, and I didn't care. Here, you put a couple -- you put 50 people in the tee box, and I'm nervous.

Q. Really?

MARK MULDER: Yeah. 18 tee right there, that's not a fun shot. I'm not comfortable doing it.

Q. Phoenix is like Scottsdale. 16 at Scottsdale?

MARK MULDER: I'm not playing it with all those people. You got to play the adrenaline. You got to understand that I'm going to hit the ball further with all the people because you're so amped up. You're nervous. You've got that energy. It's just the way it is.

I just kind of -- I'm getting better at it because I've done this more and more. Trust me, there's no part of me that's comfortable. This is nerve-racking, but I love the mental grind of it.

My career ended early, man, with shoulder surgery. So to be able to compete and compete at a high level with all these guys -- because everybody here wants to win and they're all super competitive. We've got Hall of Famers in the field. So don't think for a second they don't want to win this thing too. Doesn't mean they're going to, but they want to.

I think all of us, I just want to be in that final group or two to where you can look those guys in the eye and be like, I'm coming for you.

Q. I got you.

MARK MULDER: Exactly. That's all you want.

Q. You know what makes it easier?

MARK MULDER: No, I don't. What do you got? Something secret?

Q. Yes.

MARK MULDER: What?

Q. Be closer to the ground, closer to the ball. You shrink yourself, you'll be as good as me.

MARK MULDER: You've won that battle.

Q. My kid won't even look at me. You think you've got pressure.

MARK MULDER: I got cleaner air up here (laughter).

Q. See? That's why, when you're in school -- this is what happens. When you're in school and they do a fire drill, they put tall people in the back. You know why? Tall people burn slower.

MARK MULDER: But you can't see over anybody. You can't see over this camera we're looking into. What do you do when you go to sporting events? You cover golf. How are you supposed to see over the first row of people?

Q. This is why my badge says inside the ropes (laughter).

MARK MULDER: Boy, you are lucky.

Q. Yes, I know. Wait until the next time you want to come do a tournament.

MARK MULDER: Next year I'm going to come back to this tournament, and my son's going to be taller than you, and he's only 10.

Q. Let me tell you something, I dominate in fifth grade NERF basketball.

MARK MULDER: I believe that because you quit growing after fifth grade.

Q. Third grade, shut up. There you go. Mark Mulder, smart aleck. We're all rooting for him to win tomorrow.

MARK MULDER: No, we're not.

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