

January 14, 2018



An Interview With:

MARDY FISH SCOTT PAREL

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on winning again. How does it feel to come up, play in this tournament, get your competitive juices flowing again, and come out on top?

MARDY FISH: It's awesome. Diamond Resorts puts on such a great event. Mike Milthorpe puts on such a great event. It seems like every time we come down here, you never hear the answer no. They always say yes to everything. They treat us like kings and queens, and we'll always come back for Mike Flaskey and Brian and Grande. We had a blast.

Obviously, it's a bonus to win, but it's a really fun week regardless.

THE MODERATOR: You said you're about to catch a flight to Australia. What's in Australia?

MARDY FISH: There's a tennis tournament down there, and I've got to talk about that. And the Vikings just scored a touchdown. So we're good. Everyone's good.

THE MODERATOR: Scott just walked in the room. You played with him today. What can you tell us about Scott's game?

MARDY FISH: Unbelievable to watch. What a beautiful swing and just a gentleman. We had a blast. I loved watching the whole time. I annoyed him with question after question of are you looking at the scoreboard yet kind of questions. Super annoying sort of things.

But hopefully he saw a little bit of my -- the reason why I was so good at my game was because I was a grinder and mentally tough. That sort of translates into an individual game like golf. Hopefully, that showed a little bit more him. Hopefully, the seniors had fun because they add a lot of value to this tournament.

Q. Mardy, 13th hole, it's in the trees left. He makes double, you make birdie. That's kind of it, huh?

MARDY FISH: Yeah, that was a turn of events really. He had made back-to-back birdies. I couldn't really get anything going even though I was only level par or something like that. I only made one birdie maybe or two birdies at the time, a bunch of pars in a row. And ones at the end of tournaments, unless you're up a lot, is not going to get it done against these good players.

That was a huge momentum swing because, like I said, he was coming off birdie-birdie and gained four points in those two holes. Any time you go backwards, you can't really get away with those things if someone else is playing well, between him and I. He gave me two of them there, and that was it.

Q. Mardy, how much did you feed off him (Scott Parel)?

MARDY FISH: A ton. You don't want to -- sort of arrogantly, you want to -- I want to show some of these guys that I can play pretty good golf, and then you want to kind of keep up as well and try and see how you can do in their field a little bit in the back of your mind. Obviously, trying to win my event, but sometimes it's fun to look and see where you stand in a real tournament when people are trying, even though I'm obviously 15 years younger.

I don't play much golf at all. I probably play once or twice a month. So hopefully I kept up pretty good, didn't get in anyone's way.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, congratulations on winning the playoff. You started the week feeling a little sick with the flu. Do you feel better today?

SCOTT PAREL: I feel better now. Still a little bit, my head is pretty congested, but definitely feel better than I did on Tuesday.

THE MODERATOR: Talk us through the last 20 minutes of the day. You were waiting on the 18th tee in regulation. What were you thinking about as you were waiting to hit that last tee shot?

SCOTT PAREL: Well, obviously, I was wanting to get it on the green and two-putt and make a par. Unfortunately, Mark hit a shot that we don't like to talk about in golf right in front of me, and I got a little distracted by his tee shot and hit a very poor shot, a poor chip, a decent putt.

Lucky enough with the way the format and this works, that I was still able to go to a playoff. And then not that much better a shot in the playoff, but a little better and in a better spot.

I think Scott Dunlap got probably fooled a little bit. Probably when he played there, I'm sure that hole was downwind. All of a sudden in those last 20 minutes, the wind turned into us. I think he hit the same club that he probably hit in regulation. He didn't catch it, I'm sure, like he wanted, but I don't think either one of us had enough club there.

Q. You think he hit it a little heavy?

SCOTT PAREL: I think he hit it a little heavy. I hit mine a little heavy too. Fortunately for me, I took a conservative line there.

THE MODERATOR: Starting the season with a win in a playoff really tight coming down the stretch, a lot of good things for the start of the season, isn't it?

SCOTT PAREL: For sure, no doubt. Today I really felt like I was going to have to make some birdies, obviously, and starting slow the first two days on the front nine, I didn't think probably would work too well. Put yourself under that much pressure where you have to make birdies on the back nine, maybe you're not going to do it. So I got off to a better start, made some birdies on the front nine, and then got hot there in the middle.

I didn't really look at where I stood until I -- when I made the birdie on 12, kind of tried to figure out where I stood as far as everybody else.

Q. Scott, where does this week rank in your professional career?

SCOTT PAREL: You know, that's a good question. For me -- I mean, obviously, I'm thrilled to death to win this golf tournament. My expectations were pretty low just because of the way my health and the way I was feeling. So maybe that was a good thing. I mean, it certainly has got to be, you know, I'm sure the best win of my career.

I'm not sure it was the most important win. Probably the most important win was when I won on the Web.com in 2013 just so I kind of built some momentum and kept my career alive out there until I could turn 50.

But to beat people who are in the Hall of Fame and Major winners and guys I play with every week now, fortunately for me, it's going to for sure, hopefully, give me a lot of confidence for the rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, I know you have a lot of support from the guys out on Tour. Does this give you even more validation heading into your first start at Boca Raton in a couple of weeks?

SCOTT PAREL: I don't know. I think everybody feels like I'm good enough to play on this Tour. I mean, my game the last two years has been pretty solid to win. Maybe now they do feel like, maybe if I get in that situation again, that maybe I can withstand the pressure and win at the end. I don't know. I really don't think those guys are too worried about me. I'll just play the best I can, and we'll see where it goes.

Q. Just clarify the flu. How many days were you in bed that you didn't play? And what percent did you feel during the three rounds?

SCOTT PAREL: So my son and I went to the Georgia-Alabama National Championship Game Monday, and then we drove here Tuesday. When I got up Tuesday morning, I was feeling pretty bad. I could tell that I had a Fever. And when we got here Tuesday, basically, I went straight to bed. I had about a 101.5 Fever.

I didn't leave -- I actually came to the pairings, our mandatory meeting on Wednesday, but I was basically in bed from when we got there Tuesday until Thursday morning with a Fever and chills. Luckily, my Fever broke Thursday. I came out to the golf course on Thursday morning, hit balls for about two hours, went straight back and rested.

As the week's gone on, Friday I probably felt my worst. I was still kind of achy a little bit and not much energy. I felt a little better yesterday, and then today -- the last couple days has just been really bad head congestion. So no more Fever.

Q. Friday achy, you birdied half the golf course, nine holes. Does that give you -- thus support the thesis, beware the ailing golfer?

SCOTT PAREL: Yeah, beware the injured animal, that's for sure. I think it's the expectations. Obviously, I wasn't 100 percent, so my expectations were to go out there and try to finish and do as well as I can, and whatever happens happens.

I'd never seen the golf course. I didn't play a practice round. I had a book, and my caddie had gone around it, but just playing it basically blind without any expectations, sometimes that works out okay.

And especially in a format like this, I think, where you want to be aggressive. You want to make birdies. You don't have to -- conservative really isn't much of a play in these kinds of events. So that probably helps. I didn't worry about, well, let's not miss it here. Let's not miss it there. It's pretty much try to make birdie every hole.

Q. Like I asked Mardy, I know Mark kind of struggled on the back, but did it help with him playing so well and golfers kind of feed off each other sometimes?

SCOTT PAREL: Yeah, I really enjoyed playing with Mardy the last two days. I was really impressed with his game. He probably hit one of the best tee shots I've seen in a long, long time on 16 yesterday into a breeze off the left, and he just hit a driver 15 feet from the hole.

Yeah, he's a very solid golfer, and Mark is too. Mark just made really one bad swing there today. I don't know about feeding, but they were definitely a lot of fun to play with.

Q. I can't believe he plays once or twice a month. That's ridiculous.

SCOTT PAREL: Yeah, the golf swing he has and his tempo, it was very impressive.

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