

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**August 15, 2018**



**DUDLEY HART**

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**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** Dudley, you just turned 50 August 4th?

**DUDLEY HART:** August 4th, yep.

**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** And you're making your PGA TOUR Champions debut here at the Dick's Sporting Goods Open. Just start off with how much you've been looking forward to this day.

**DUDLEY HART:** Yeah, it's a weird birthday to have. Most people are a little depressed when they turn 50, I would imagine. I had mixed emotions. I was happy to be able to come out on the Champions Tour and get out with a lot of my friends. A lot of my friends were a little bit older than I am and have been out here for a while, so I was really looking forward to that.

The flip side is like, darn, I'm 50. I'm like, that's really old. I don't feel like I am. I look in the mirror and I don't feel 50. I feel about 80 some mornings. But anyway, I'm super excited to be out here and start the next chapter of my competitive life.

**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** And you had a spinal fusion surgery back in '09 and really haven't played a full season since.

**DUDLEY HART:** No. Actually, I had two at the same level, L5-S1, two fusion surgeries. And the first one, I spent a couple years trying to come back from. In hindsight, I finally went to see another doctor and the first one did not go as planned. We had some screws that were not in the vertebrae. I'm not a doctor, but I'm guessing when they put screws in your vertebrae to fuse your back, that they should be in.

So anyway I had to have it redone and that set me back a while, and I've really struggled for a few years just to be able to play two, three, four days in a row. Knock on wood, I feel like I've gotten to the point where I've been able to play and practice every day for the last -- pretty much for the last year and a half or so. Not really had any problems other than probably what every other guy out here has occasionally. You wake up and everything is stiff that you didn't even know you had and you work it out and go from there.

**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** And you had three starts here back when it was the BC Open at En-Joie?

**DUDLEY HART:** Yep.

**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** What do you remember most?

**DUDLEY HART:** What I remember most, you're going to laugh, but I remember the spiedies. I can't wait to get back and have another spiedie. I remember a great layout. I grew up in Western New York. I was born in Rochester, but I spent most of my early life in Buffalo and actually lived in Buffalo until about three years ago. We moved back up when my kids were small to raise them there. After about 12 years, I gave up, I couldn't handle the winters anymore, so we went back to Florida. But this is as close to home as we're going to get. I've got a lot of friends coming down from the Buffalo area and really looking forward to it.

**Q. Growing up, did you have any sort of relationship with Joey Sindelar and did you happen to talk with him about back issues?**

**DUDLEY HART:** I haven't seen Joey in probably a year, year and a half. Once in a while we'll bump into each other in an outing or charity event in Florida, he spends some time in the winter down there. We have talked about it in the past. There are quite a few guys obviously that have had back issues. Not a lot of guys have had fusions, so that was -- Tiger obviously has now. When I had mine, it was kind of a frustrating thing because there was no book. If you're in football and you blow out your ACL, they do X, Y and Z, the protocol is pretty simple. As a golfer, you're kind of on your own to figure it out and there's a lot of trial and error. I tried yoga, I tried pilates, this doesn't feel well, and there really wasn't a book or any kind of manual and say, you do this, you'll be fine, this is how long it's going to take. So that part of dealing with the back problem was frustrating. I don't know how much help Joey could have really given me with that because he hadn't gone through quite the same thing.

**Q. Playing here at En-Joie, relatively close to your home, does that give you any sort of extra juice when you get out there?**

**DUDLEY HART:** A little bit. At this stage of all of our lives on the Champions Tour, we've played so many golf tournaments that you're always excited to play. Even though we're on the downside of our golf careers -- I think everybody would admit that, we're not delusional -- but we're still competitive and this is what we've done our whole lives. We may not be able to turn and create the speed and fly it 310 like a lot of the young guys on the big Tour -- maybe there are a few guys out here that can, but I definitely cannot, but I can move it okay still. It's still -- you don't lose that competitive juice and that fire. But being close to home and having more friends coming down to watch, that's always special when that happens.

**Q. When you think of all the courses you could make your Champions Tour debut at, what kind of stands out that you'll be here doing it at En-Joie?**

**DUDLEY HART:** Well, to be honest with you, if I looked at the schedule and planted my birthday, if I was able to move my birthday anywhere, this would be it, to be honest with you.

Like I said, being a New York kid and only being three hours from Buffalo and having the opportunity, a lot of family and friends to come down and watch. And New York's a special place to me, even though not this area, but I grew up here. I moved back from Jupiter, Florida. I'm probably the only person, especially a golfer, to willingly move from Jupiter, Florida, to Buffalo. Shows you how much I love the area. I just wussed out, when I got closer to 50, I couldn't deal with shoveling snow anymore.

I honestly would not pick another tournament to start at. This is an absolute dream for me and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Q. How many family members and friends do you think are coming from Buffalo here?**

**DUDLEY HART:** Well, I've got a couple family members that I know coming from -- that live in Rochester, and that I know of, I think there's probably 15 or 20 guys that are coming down, and their kids. Yeah, I'm looking forward to that. They're all waiting on the tee times, tell me when the tee times come out. I said, look, I'll let you know.

**Q. Are you going to have any family members caddying for you?**

**DUDLEY HART:** No. I've got a guy that caddied for me early on on Tour. My kid's actually in Florida. This is the downside to living in Florida, started school today. So it would have been neat to have my son, who's a 16-year-old aspiring golfer and he's caddied for me a couple times. It would have been neat to have him the first week out, but he's got his own golf. His high school golf down there starts right away, too. He's got to do what he has to do.

My wife has caddied twice and both times on one of the hilliest golf courses you could ever see and lost a toenail and she has retired. Both times lost a toenail. And I don't blame her. She hasn't left me yet, but she's lost a couple toenails and she's like, that's it. This place would be a lot easier to walk, but of course I bring her to a place that's a ski resort, so that should have been warning sign number one.

**MAUREEN RADZAVICZ:** Anything else? Thank you, Dudley. Good luck this week.