

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
March 9, 2018

JOEY SINDELAR (-4)



Q. Great start today.

JOEY SINDELAR: Very pleased, yeah. This is really cool because, you know, we always say when we come here, we love the fun and the simplicity, and they've cared for the course better and better each year, it seems to me, that we've been here. And they've removed a lot of trees, and thank goodness when it's cooler and windy because some of them were in the way.

But it was -- when the temperature goes down a little bit -- so first of all, firm greens are everything. I don't know what Scott told you, I'm sure he'd say the same thing. Golfers' scoring enemies are firm greens and wind, and what a beautiful combo. To have a simple nowhere-near long golf course would drive you nuts in the simplest way. Nothing unfair, you've got to stand there and hit good shots. You know, sometimes you do and sometimes you don't.

Q. So you had those hiccups on 5 and 6. The wind must have been an enormous factor there because both your approach shots came up short.

JOEY SINDELAR: Yeah, so the -- so each of those -- the first one, 5, is that 5, the longest one?

Q. Yeah.

JOEY SINDELAR: So if you're over that green, you're done. I thought I could fly that five yards on. We're not looking at what gets to the pin, we're looking at if you're in between, do not take the one that goes over because you're going to be downslope, downwind, and you see how fast these greens are. So whenever we're into the wind we don't want to be missing long because it gets really tough.

So that was on 5 I hit a beautiful 4-iron, I thought it was going to get at least on. Then on the next hole, 6 and 9 were identical to me, I thought I was supposed to be hitting smooth 7-irons and I hit them just a little bit easier than I wanted but I was off half a club in my judgment. And these greens are difficult. Always the story here is the difficulty of the greens. There's the optical illusion of the hillside and they're very fast and they're sometimes a little bit bumpy. They're in beautiful condition, but it's hard. These are very hard greens to make putts.

I had an odd day. I made a lot of putts from eight feet to 15 and I missed a lot of putts from seven feet to four feet. It was just a funny day.

Q. On 5 and 6, on both those approach shots I noticed you pulled out your putter. Is that your shot normally?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yeah, it is, it is. Although is this Zoysia grass?

Q. Kikuyu.

JOEY SINDELAR: Kikuyu, yeah, so it's a little different. It's not super slow, but it's enough slow you've got to factor it in. I'm a putt-when-you-can-putt kind of guy. Chipping has never been my genius if I even had any genius. I would have chipped -- doing it again, I would have chipped the first one. Other than that, the other two were good putts.

But it wasn't the fault of the -- you would love to be sharper. If I would have gotten two of those three, that would have been good.

Q. Must be that caddie you got?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yes, sir. But that was the fault of the irons, that was not the fault of the other stuff.

Q. So why is it so hard to win out here? You had seven wins on the regular tour.

JOEY SINDELAR: Well, I had a weird story. I was two or three years in so I came out in '12, and then -- excuse me, I came out in '08. So I played '08, '09, '10, and I was doing really good and ramping up and getting closer.

Then my back went bad in the beginning of '12 and I kind of limped through the year and then had surgery in the fall of '12. And then after surgery I came right back in the first of '13 and the exact same pain came back. They said we did what we could do, we don't think you're going to play again. Two different specialists.

So that made me very, very sweaty on my forehead because I had a couple in college at the time, a couple of boys in college. So changed my swing entirely, lost a bunch of weight to try to be in the best shape I could be in to try -- because they said that's the best thing you can do is try to be in better shape. For a year and a half I didn't even know where the gas pedal was in my golf swing, so there was a whole year.

Then all of a sudden you're in your high 50s and the young guys are 50 and they're better. So it just was a weird -- it was a weird loss of two full years from injury, and then I wasn't as strong anymore. I don't know if it was the weight or the swing. I'm actually still becoming strong even now, even four full years later, learning how to be stronger. So it was a pretty wild tale, but I'm very, very happy to be playing again.

Q. Was there any lingering effect from the --

JOEY SINDELAR: Pulmonary embolism in 2009? Only that I'm scared to death anytime something happens, every time I'm on a plane and all that garbage. But no, that's not a health thing.

Q. Was the weight related to that, losing weight?

JOEY SINDELAR: No, that was just dumb dehydration in an airplane, getting in airplanes without being hydrated and sitting still for four hours because I'm not a genetic clotter.

The only complication there, and this is way more than you're going to want to write, but I'm an extremely arthritic person. I have this weird thing called DISH, D-I-S-H, and the treatment -- to make yourself feel better, it's ibuprofen. You treat the symptoms, not the disease in my case.

The problem is you can't take those drugs when you're on blood thinners because if your stomach bleeds, you're a goner, or you're in big trouble. So I have to take this whole cocktail of stuff and I can only do it on playing days, so I'm never really loose until Friday. And I have to get right off it on Sunday to start -- so it's just been weird, but I'll take it. I'm playing when they told me I wouldn't, so that's okay.

Q. And your game right now is where you want it to be?

JOEY SINDELAR: No, no. Right now I'm -- this year was weird, another one. I've got a meniscus tear, which is a nothing except when you're on blood thinners, they don't want to do surgery because you're a clotter. So they said until your leg falls off, you're not going to have surgery. So I didn't get to practice much, so my year is just beginning. I'm at about 157, 158 ball speed on the launch monitors. My goal is to get back over 160, I would be happy. Three miles an hour ball speed would be seven, eight yards and that would kind of get me -- you know, I'm not getting younger, the clock's ticking away.

So that's my goal. I mean, I'm close and I'm now a golfer, right? I can shoot 4 under and be competitive, but you know, you look at these -- the two guys I played with today mash the ball. Brandt Jobe, John Daly, Kevin Sutherland, they just knock the living snot out of it. So I'm getting older and they're getting longer. That man right there, I call that man "Muscles" because he hits it so darn good. But making putts is still important, so while I'm trying to get stronger, I would try to just make more putts.