

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
October 12, 2018



GENE SAUERS (-10)

Q. So 62?

GENE SAUERS: 62.

Q. What was working for you today?

GENE SAUERS: Everything. I drove the ball great. I missed a couple fairways, but I drove the ball great, hit a lot of great iron shots close and I made the putts. That's been my downfall for a long time, get them in there tight and I don't make the putts. Today I made the putts.

I told myself this morning coming out I'm just going to hit one shot at a time. I'm hitting the ball pretty good, so hit one shot at a time, hit fairways, try and have some opportunities. I've been working on my putting, so I got a new putter for about the last three weeks now. It's a new putter, a new Callaway putter and I made everything I looked at today, so got to shoot 62.

Q. Now, this is your career low on the PGA TOUR Champions. What's it like to kind of stay out of your own way when you're playing that well to keep it going?

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, it's tough. Sometimes you get a little ahead of yourself. You're thinking how many holes have I got left, what's that hole like. I just kind of stopped doing that and just talked to my caddie and talked about football, kind of just try and stay out of my way. When I get to my ball, I think about my shot and what I've got to do, so there's 20 seconds or so I really need to focus. Other than that, I kind of -- not to get ahead of myself.

Q. Did you come to the golf course today not quite knowing what to expect in terms of playability after all the rain?

GENE SAUERS: Well, I hit some good shots on the range. I knew I was hitting the ball good. I've been hitting the ball good for the last couple weeks, just wasn't really scoring that well. Like I said, the putter's been letting me down. I hit the ball great at Pebble a couple weeks ago and I just couldn't make any putts and today I made them all.

Q. Concerns about the condition of the course, though, with all the rain?

GENE SAUERS: It was shocking how dry it is. It's really good. Tomorrow and Sunday I don't think we'll be playing lift, clean and place. It's pretty dry out there, it's nice. The golf course is in super shape.

Q. It's been a really solid year for you this year, you've had two seconds and a third?

GENE SAUERS: Right.

Q. Missing the one thing in the year?

GENE SAUERS: Exactly. You know, I kind of lost a few spots. I've been in the top-10 for most of the year and I think I'm 15th now, so hopefully I can keep playing good on the weekend and see what happens and go from there. Like I said, I've got three more tournaments after this one, so I'm looking forward to the rest of the year.

Q. Do you think people really realize how competitive this tour is now?

GENE SAUERS: I don't really think they do, I don't think they do. A lot of young guys coming out, "Oh, man, I can't wait to get out there," which is great. You know, I was saying the same thing. You think I'm going to go out there and kick some butt, but they come out here and they find out how good we really are. You've got to wake up and you've got to play your game.

Q. I don't think a lot of people know your story, the sickness you went through the last 10 or 12 years. It's kind of a second lease on life?

GENE SAUERS: I'll tell you what, the Lord's blessed me with some good golf lately. Like I said, I took seven years off, didn't touch a golf club, and to come back to compete with all these guys right now, it's amazing.

Q. There had to be days when you thought you would never --

GENE SAUERS: Oh, in the hospital --

Q. -- play golf?

GENE SAUERS: No, exactly. When I was in that hospital, I told my wife I wanted to play golf again and her eyes got real big, and she says, "I just hope you're able to walk again or maybe just play golf at the muni with some of your buddies." I've accomplished that, too. The next goal is to win again.

Q. Somebody told me, were any of the treatments here in this area?

GENE SAUERS: Yeah, Duke.

Q. Who is the doctor?

GENE SAUERS: I can't remember. I know his first name is Eugene. I can't remember his

last name off the top of my head.

Q. How long were you at Duke?

GENE SAUERS: I was there for four days. Spent four days in the hospital there at Duke and they got the burning stopped and then I spent seven weeks in the hospital in Savannah.

Q. So you first came to Duke to see a specialist?

GENE SAUERS: Right.

Q. Are they the ones who found out what was wrong with you or did they already know the diagnosis?

GENE SAUERS: Nobody really knew. I still don't think they know today, but he got the burning stopped. By the time I left Savannah I had a few black spots on me and by the time I got up here, five-hour drive, I was just covered. It was burning from the inside out, just spreading, and luckily he got it stopped.

Q. How do you stop that?

GENE SAUERS: I have no idea how he did it. I was out of it, I was on a morphine pump and epidurals in my back. I didn't know anything. Just glad to be here, I know that.