

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 13, 2018



FRED COUPLES

Q. You said you wanted to come back when the PGA was down there a couple years ago. What's it like --

FRED COUPLES: Where is this?

Q. At the PGA Championship at Lake Orion down the road a few years ago, and you mentioned here about wanting to come back. When you first heard it was coming, man, what did you think?

FRED COUPLES: Oh, I loved it. You know, it was a lot of people here's favorite tournament. Great crowds, a really, really nice golf course, and I think it would probably be great for us now. I think if the regular guys came, they would drive half the holes and hit wedges into every other hole. So for us, it's perfect.

And I won here a long time ago, but it's not really because of that. It's a very, very fun spot to be. I was with Cadillac a long time, so I would go down and see all my friends and have dinner with Pete Gerosa Friday night, who's a long-time Cadillac guy who's retired. It's a good event for me. I hope it stays a long time. I hope I can play at least a couple years here.

Q. Obviously your win here was a highlight, but what are some of the other things that kind of come to mind, some other memories you have of Warwick Hills?

FRED COUPLES: Well, they have great pro-ams. I remember I played with Bobby Rahal once, and when you see people on TV like that and you get to play with them, it's a lot of fun.

But honestly, it's really the golf course. I love this golf course. It's got big greens. I'm from Seattle, so it's got a little bit of that with the pines, and our greens are not this big. But I think some people enjoy places by how they play and I'm one of those guys and I like the 17th hole. It was probably back then one of the first spots to -- where you could start hearing them chant when you're on the 3rd or 4th hole when you're a thousand yards away. So they started it all right here and Phoenix took over.

Q. Do you like that kind of atmosphere?

FRED COUPLES: I think it's great, yeah. Anyone who can come out and watch golf -- obviously you don't want people behind you on a tee yelling when you're swinging, but never had a problem with any of it. You know, you get a little more edgy because you want

to hit a good shot and it's a little more pressure packed. I know that sounds funny because if you don't hit a good shot they're going to let you have it, but it's one hole, it's fun. And they have those kids, and most of them were young kids that came and it was pretty exciting to be here. Like I said, they started it and, you know, I think Phoenix certainly has taken over with whatever they do out there. I haven't played in that tournament in a long time, but it's fun to watch.

Q. Fred, you play a limited schedule now, so how's your back feeling right now?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. Well, I think this is my fifth Senior Tour event, which isn't very, very good. I feel okay. To be honest with you, you know, it's the end of the year and I love this tournament, so I'm here, but I'm not playing all that well, nor have I been practicing or playing. But I do have a great pairing with David Toms, who I love playing with, and Jay Haas, so that is really a good thing. To be honest, I know that sounds funny, but two guys I really like to play with, so maybe that will help my game.

But I need to get through this year, get through the offseason and hopefully come out and play a few more tournaments next year because one every two months is not really good for your game.

Q. It was important for you to be here, you wanted to be here?

FRED COUPLES: Oh, no, I love this tournament, yeah. I wouldn't miss it. And I don't do that for many of them, but it's really the idea of a new sponsor. You know, I pulled out of the Shaw. I went to Seattle and played and I had a really good last day, and I pulled out of the Shaw because I just had a little tweak and I didn't go up there. It really is a bad deal because that tournament has been very good to all of us, including me, and I won there, which helps.

But here, winning a long time ago, and I thought it was 1990, someone said it was '94, so it's a little later than I thought. This is a really, really good place. We're lucky to be here. Ally is certainly a great sponsor and I think it's a great move for our Tour. This is somewhere where people can say, oh, I remember watching that tournament a long time ago, I know that hole. So a lot of times we go, people don't know where we are or what we're doing, but here, this was one of the best tournaments on Tour for a long time.

Q. You don't remember the year, maybe you don't remember too much, but take us back to that Sunday when you won.

FRED COUPLES: Well, my caddie, Joey, we were texting this morning. I said, I don't really remember. He said, Well, you hit it close on the last hole. And Corey was right behind me, so I birdied the last and I think I won by one or two. But honestly, I don't remember a whole lot of any shots that I've played that long ago. I know I've won a few tournaments, but I don't know what I did on Sunday. It might have been -- there was one time, it might have been 36 holes on Sunday.

Q. It was, and you stuck it on 18.

FRED COUPLES: I do know that because Joe just told me this morning, but I don't remember that. But he's just telling me, he thought I played yesterday, so he's saying, How's the course? I said, I'm going out there this morning to see it. But everyone texted me it's almost the exact same.

Q. How do you like the difference between the atmosphere of the PGA TOUR and the PGA TOUR Champions?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, the PGA TOUR Champions, that's a great question. I think we certainly don't get the crowds that they get, but we play -- I hope we get them this week. I can't imagine we're not.

Q. Some of the guys mentioned the camaraderie that you guys have just after years of playing.

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, for us. Oh, for us?

Q. Yeah.

FRED COUPLES: No, for us this is a treat. Like I said, I'm playing with Jay and David Toms, which oddly enough since David turned 50 I haven't played with him out here, so that's kind of a shocking thing, but just the tempo of his swing and his putting stroke will help me.

But the camaraderie, yeah, it's amazing. We don't go to many dinners or play many practice rounds because there's a Wednesday pro-am and a Thursday pro-am, whereas on the other Tour, you know, you get in there, you can play Tuesday and a practice round with guys and yuck it up and do all that. Here it's pretty serious.

I got in last night, I'll play today and then we start tomorrow and you're gone Sunday night. So it's a quick week, but they're fun events. I've played enough, but I miss a few tournaments, which bugs me. Like I say, this would be one of them.

But I want to play a little more, I just physically, I just can't last. So I play once and go home, and two or three weeks in a row just is way out of my league at the moment.

Q. I read a story recently where, I think it was a Golf Digest piece, that said the next time you watch Fred Couples on a golf course could be your last. Is that true?

FRED COUPLES: Well, if I said that here, I could say the same thing. No, no. I mean, I'm hoping to play until I'm 70 and then go in the wheelchair. But it's the traveling that's really hard.

I don't know how I really answered that. I say a lot of kind of ridiculous things, that would be one of them. But retiring in golf, there would be really no reason to. Tom Watson is still shooting his age, Tom Kite is still out here. I don't know their exact ages, I think Tom Watson is 68 and he plays unreal.

So I don't see my body doing that when I'm that age, but I think another couple years of doing this and I'll keep playing. But it's not going to be like to try and win the Schwab Cup. I've said that five years ago, six years ago when I first got out here and I end up playing 12 times when you've got Bernhard Langer winning 12 times. So you're not going to win the Schwab Cup against him.

But it is a hell of a tour. We have great players out here and I enjoy it. I just can't play a lot of them.

Q. What's made golf so special over the years in Michigan?

FRED COUPLES: Well, Michigan, we've had great majors here, I've played in a couple of them. And there's great golf. I think you guys know how nice the golf courses are here. I'm from Seattle, so we get to play all year. We might get a little snow, but I think you do the same here. It might get a little colder.

Those majors were great and I think just this tournament and Buick -- at one time I think Buick had like four tournaments. Those days are gone. Maybe Dell has a couple. But on our tour we're very excited to be back here. But again, when we played the Buick Open here, we would see all the people in San Diego and I think there was one like in Georgia at the end of the year, the Buick Classic, and New York, so we see the same people all the time. Maybe with Ally we'll be seeing them hopefully for a few years. But Detroit is a great area, Michigan. I've played skins games up in, what is it, Traverse City up there, with Phil and all those guys, Mickelson. So I enjoy coming to Michigan. I don't come that often anymore, but now I will for a couple years.

Q. You talked about Cadillac and you used to eat with the guys down there?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah.

Q. Anything else around town you used to do?

FRED COUPLES: You know, back when I felt better I would drive to see a Tigers game, which is well worth it. They're okay, but they were really good for several years a long time ago, and I enjoy baseball. But now it's as soon as I'm done here, I'm probably going to putt a little after my round to get used to these greens and then crash and come out and play tomorrow.