

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
June 21, 2019



KIRK TRIPLETT (-5)

JACKIE SERVAIS: Great round for you today. Can you give us a little feedback on how you're feeling out there?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, good feelings for me, you know, being a past champion here from 2016. I've always enjoyed the golf course, I think it's fun to play. Playing with two great guys. The host, Mr. Stricker, just a fabulous man. Good to catch up with he and his wife, Nicki. Scott and I have had some battles this year, so it was enjoyable to be out with him.

Just overall I made some nice putts in the middle of the back nine and that really is what was the key to my round.

JACKIE SERVAIS: How much do you feel that group helped your vibe today?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I got off to kind of a slow start, but, you know, they're hitting good shots and I was fortunate to hit a couple and catch up quickly. I didn't have to sit there at 1 over for a long time.

Then, when we all birdied No. 9, I hit a nice shot on 10 and made a difficult putt and I just felt like, okay, I'm going to shoot a good round today. Sometimes you don't know where it comes from, but it felt good.

Q. Scott's gained a lot of attention for winning three times, top of the lists, and you quietly have snuck into No. 2. Do you think people understand how well you're playing this year?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, if they look at the list, yeah, but as Steve asked me out there on about No. 5, he goes, "Did you go to Japan?" I said, "Well, obviously you only remember who won, because Scott won and I finished second," and Steve didn't even know I had gone. So maybe you're right, maybe I am sneaking up there.

But I've had a nice year. I've been in contention a lot. Mostly I've just kind of been driving it in play and making the odd 20-foot putt, and I think most tour pros will tell you the key to a good season is just make one more 20-foot putt.

Q. And the fact that you have had a good blueprint here from year one, do you come back and use that? Did you score on the same parts of the golf course that you've become comfortable with?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I don't think it's that so much; it's just an overall comfort with the

course, right? I like the speed of the greens, I like the way the course plays, I like the rhythm that it has. I don't feel like there's any holes out here that really, you know, I'm definitely afraid of. There's some hard holes, but I know that I can birdie some of the hard holes out here as well. And some of the easy holes have tough pins and you just sort of have to pick your spots and wait for it to happen, which if you've done that, which I did in 2016, I think it's easier to do it again.

Q. This tour's seen a lot of rain over the last couple months, but rain is expected Saturday and Sunday. Do you have to prepare yourself differently for the next couple days?

KIRK TRIPLETT: I think we're always prepared for it, so we've got our gear. We don't like it any more than you guys do, but we've done it before, we'll fight through it. Sometimes the rain is -- it doesn't affect it that much. This tour, you seem to get a lot of thunderstorms, and when it's raining, you're not playing. You go back out there when it's wet and soft.

Now, that's what the adjustment is more typically than playing in the poor weather is adjusting to the fact that, hey, these wedges are going to spin back a little bit more, some of the tee shots are going to play a little bit longer. That seems to be to me more of the adjustment playing golf in the United States in the bad weather as opposed to other places. The British Open, you're used to seeing it pour and rain, but never thunder and lightning. So they're out there playing in that.

Q. How do you like being sandwiched between the two local guys right now?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Oh, Jerry and --

Q. Jerry and Stricker.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, you know, you guys claim Jerry, but Jerry just bought a house down the street from me in Paradise Valley, Arizona, so once he spends a winter down there, you may never see Jerry again.

Q. How important is a hot start for him, to get 5, 6 under early?

KIRK TRIPLETT: This tour's a 5-under-a-day tour, right? If you want to contend to win tournaments most weeks, you've got to figure out a way to get to 12, 13, 14, 15 under. It's really important, really important. I'm very happy.

Q. Was the wind an issue at all today?

KIRK TRIPLETT: I think it's just enough to make you check it, yeah. It certainly affected the shots a little bit, but not to the point where, wow, the shot's really hard because of the wind.

Q. It looked like Steve could have picked up a few more shots on putts that seemed to burn the edges. How would you describe the way he played today?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Steve who?

Q. Stricker.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Oh, Steve Stricker. He played a beautiful round. Kept the ball in play, kept the ball in front of him, had a lot of birdie opportunities. It was no surprise when he knocked that one in on the last hole because he really hadn't made a long one yet, but he struck the ball very nicely.

I'm thinking he would like to win this tournament, what do you think? Do you think he would like to?

JACKIE SERVAIS: All right. Thank you for your time.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Thanks, guys.