

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW

November 5, 2019

SCOTT McCARRON



LAURA VESCOVI: Scott, thanks for joining us today. We're here at the Charles Schwab Cup Championship and before we start talking about the Playoffs and your position, I want to go back through your season and have you recap where you are so far. You've had an incredible season, 14 top-10s, three wins. So just a little reflection on the year so far.

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, it's obviously been a good year. I've played well the last four years out here on the PGA TOUR Champions and finished fourth in the Schwab Cup, then third, then second, and this year I'm leading going into the final event. So it's been a lot of fun having three wins. I played really well a nice stretch, I don't know, three events in about six or seven weeks earlier in the season, had a couple chances at some other times. The Senior PGA, Ken Tanigawa made a great par save at the last hole to beat me. I've put myself in position a lot of times.

I didn't play that well last week the last nine holes, which was a little disappointing because I again put myself in a decent position, was tied with Monty, who ended up winning and played a great round on Sunday. It's just been a very good year. I've had a lot of fun. Being competitive out here playing with these guys that are legends and Hall of Famers, it's just a thrill for me to be out here competing against those guys.

LAURA VESCOVI: Now looking ahead to this week, we've talked about this a lot throughout the first two Playoffs events, but being hunted instead of the hunter, so your mentality going into this week to try and maintain that No. 1 position and go home with the Cup?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, my goal this week is to win the golf tournament and to do that I've got to put myself in position with nine holes to play. If I can do that, then I'll be able to take care of what I need to take care of. I can't control what Jerry does or Monty or Bernhard. I think there's four or five guys who, with a win here, could possibly win the Schwab Cup. I've got to take care of my job first and foremost and have a chance to win this golf tournament. If I do that, then we have a good chance to win the Schwab Cup.

Q. So since you are leading the pack, do you feel like you still need to be aggressive?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, no question. I mean, I don't have a big enough lead where I can just try to shoot par around here. These guys are going to go low. It's a golf course that is in great shape, the greens are absolutely perfect, so you're going to have to go low every day. You're going to have to be aggressive. I like this golf course. I played well here the last couple years. It's got a lot of par 5s I can reach, a couple par 4s that I can be aggressive on, hit driver, get it up there near the green, but you've got to drive the ball fairly

straight here. I don't hit a lot of drivers because it's a little short and tight in some areas, but you've got to put the ball in the fairway and put the ball on the green. You have to make a lot of putts here this week.

Q. Talking about making putts, what about these greens, on the small side, and does that fit your eye?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, they are small, so if you hit the green you've got a birdie chance. Again, I think you've got to put yourself on the green below the hole. They get a little quick and I know they're a little slow right now, running about 11, but rumor has it they're going to get up to 13. So when they get that fast and you get above the hole, you're going to be playing defense a lot. So you've got to put your ball on the green and try to be below the hole a lot of times, which sometimes it's difficult, especially if you're not in the fairway trying to hit out of the rough controlling spin, because the fairways are a little soft right now. So it's tough to kind of bounce the ball up, which would be a little more of a challenge this week.

Q. So what is the most challenging aspect of this course?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, I think the most challenging aspect of this golf course is it's fairly narrow, so you've got to drive the ball straight and that's one of the biggest factors here. It's not a big golf course. You walk off every green right to the next tee. It's an old-school golf course, which is a lot of fun, but having said that, it's tight in some areas so you've got to put the ball in play.

Q. As I remember last year coming out of Sunday, you were visibly frustrated. I mean, your goal was to win the Charles Schwab Cup. You made a couple statements that was your sole goal.

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, my goal was to win the golf tournament first, and if I do that I would have won the Schwab Cup. That was the only chance.

Q. But did going into the offseason kind of change your focus, your mentality about such a tear all year? Like what was the key in those couple down months you may have had to get you fired up?

SCOTT McCARRON: You know, it was interesting. The actual key was last year I had the lead going into Sunday, so if it was a normal three rounds, which the Schwab Cup's always been, I would have won the Schwab Cup, but it was four rounds and I shot 72 on the last day. Did not play well, got off to a bad start, kind of fought back there, but Vijay Singh played a tremendous round.

But really the thing that changed for me was I doubled 17 and I was really disappointed because at the time I still maybe thought I had a chance, birdie 17, eagle 18, you know, I might have had a chance. I doubled 17 and I was kind of down in the dumps a little bit

there. My caddie looked at me and he says, "Listen, I just looked at the board and if you birdie the last hole, you're going to finish second, so let's go make birdie." So that kind of flipped the switch for me to being down to being, okay, let's go make birdie, and I did that.

Again, even though I didn't win the Schwab Cup, it was a positive thing going into the offseason that I was able to rebound after kind of the mistake and come back and make birdie and finish second in the Schwab Cup, which that's a big deal.

Q. We all know the caddie-player relationship is an important one. Maybe can you share a little bit about your caddie, a little bit of history and how he keeps you on track?

SCOTT McCARRON: Sure, yeah. His name's Rich Mayo. He actually played for a year on the old Hogan Tour way back in the day, was a good player. He came out to caddie for Paul Stankowski to kind of make some money so he could go back and play more professional golf and they had a lot of success. Paul came out and won a couple times, so Rich started caddying full time. When Paul kind of lost his card, I hired Rich to come out and caddie for me. We were together for about five or six years on the PGA TOUR. He's a great guy, a good golfer, phenomenal caddie and he's a very good sounding board. He knows when to step in, because I can run hot a little bit at times, so he can step right in there and say, okay, let's get back to task. So he's a good caddie and a mental coach you could say, too, because sometimes we need that out there.

LAURA VESCOVI: Well, thank you for joining us today. Good luck this week.

SCOTT McCARRON: Thanks.