

MARK O'MEARA (-17)

Q. It seemed like you really never let the other guys up for air today. Seemed like you really kept the pressure on, stayed out front. How did that affect sort of your --

MARK O'MEARA: I never really looked at the scoreboard, to be fair, but I hit a good tee shot on 1 and hit a 9-iron to about seven feet, six feet behind the hole, made that for birdie, so that was really nice.

I three-putted the second hole for par, but I just, I made some good birdies on the front nine. 5 under on the front, and I knew that a lot of the guys behind me are still playing pretty well. There's nine holes to play, can't get caught up into really having the lead or not having the lead.

Then the only time you really feel safe is where you're kind of somewhere up by the green on the 18th hole. I knew on the 18th tee, I asked Mitch, my caddie, I'm like, "Look, what have we got?" He said, "You've got a four-shot lead." I'm like, "Okay, maybe 3-wood, maybe rescue." I said, "Listen, I could still hit it in the water left with a 3-wood or rescue, so I'm just going to hit driver."

Fortunately, I hit a really good drive. Didn't hit the greatest second shot, but hit a super bunker shot. It's a little bit easier when you've got a three-, four-shot lead.

I'm proud of myself for hanging in there with the lead, shoot 7 under today. Obviously a very good drive on the 17th hole and a 6-iron to the par 5 and a two-putt birdie. I just didn't really make that many mistakes today, so I feel fortunate to have come out on top.

Q. Almost nine years since you last won out here.

MARK O'MEARA: Long time.

Q. How do you account for your success this week?

MARK O'MEARA: Well, I've had like 15 or 16 seconds, so that's been pretty disappointing. A lot of times when I finish second, it wasn't because I shot 71, 2, or 3. Guys just, they go low, and you just can't take your foot off the pedal out here because somebody's going to shoot a good score and come up from behind you.

Obviously, like I said earlier, no real preparation last week. Last time I hit a ball prior to this Tuesday was Sunday of Naples and I was home for a couple days in Houston. Did an interview with CBS on Wednesday, flew in Friday to Salt Lake and I was on my snowmobile

on Saturday and I was on my snowmobile all day Monday, and I flew here on Tuesday.

I practiced here on Tuesday. I felt good about the way I was swinging and my caddie, Mitch, was like -- Mitch Windsor's like "Hey, Listen, every time you go fly fishing or you go snowmobiling, you come back hitting it really well or swinging it well."

So, you know, look, I'm a lucky guy. I'm glad to have finally got another win under my belt.

Q. Sure. Where did you go snowmobiling specifically?

MARK O'MEARA: Up in Park City, outside of Park City. I have a home up there, so I've got like six snowmobiles and I ride up in the backcountry. You wouldn't think a 62-year-old guy, I pretty much get on it pretty good up there in the backcountry.

Q. What do you like about it? What do you like about snowmobiling?

MARK O'MEARA: I just think the backcountry, the powder, we've had so much snow in the Rockies this year, we ride up in the Quakies, get up to the top of the mountain, we find some open areas, we mess around. Obviously we try to stay away from avalanches, hopefully not hitting a tree. But to me it's just, I think the fun of it is just, you know, as I've improved as a guy who can ride on a sled, I've enjoyed it even more and more.

Q. Does it put you in a certain frame of mind after you've done that?

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, a relaxed frame of mind, to be honest with you. And it's good exercise, so it's a combination of both those things.

Q. Do you remember much about finishing second at Starr Pass about 30 years ago?

MARK O'MEARA: I don't. Gosh, I remember Starr Pass, a heck of a golf course. It's nice to -- look, I've had these wins on the PGA TOUR and the major championships and this and that, but it's been disappointing, to be fair, on the PGA TOUR Champions that I haven't won more, but a lot of credit goes to how good the players are out here. We've watched what Bernhard Langer has done out here on this tour, it's really quite amazing to be honest with you. And, you know, I've had a lot of seconds, and seconds, look, people only remember the guy who won. So it's nice to finally come back out on top, especially today. Like I said, starting the day at 10 under and having the lead, a lot of guys that are very good players right behind me, to get up and shoot 7 under par with one bogey is a very special day for me.

Q. Seemed like your playing partners were very happy for you on the 18th green. How does it make you feel?

MARK O'MEARA: It's good. Look, we've all competed against each other for a long, long time. Scott McCarron certainly has played some tremendous golf the last couple years, and

Kirk Triplett's a good guy, a very solid player. Yeah, I think they genuinely felt happy, and certainly to have won by four made it even that much more special.

Q. Mark, your first tour win I think was in '84?

MARK O'MEARA: Correct, Milwaukee.

Q. Do you think that here we are in 2019 and you're still competing?

MARK O'MEARA: I think that's what makes the PGA TOUR Champions so special from the standpoint that we can play for a long time. '84 seems light years away, or many, many, years ago, but winning there was special because I played with Tom Watson in the final group on Saturday and Sunday. And now in 2019, the final group here with Scott McCarron and Kirk Triplett, a lot of fine players, a lot of Hall of Famers, a lot of majors champions that play this tour. It's really a special moment for me.

Q. Was 9 maybe the turning point to a degree today?

MARK O'MEARA: I think so, I think so.

Q. You birdied and I think Kirk --

MARK O'MEARA: Made a bogey. I hit a good tee shot and I hit a 6-iron for my second shot. I caught it just a little bit thin, but it was straight at it. So the greens are a little bit slower this week, but they were firm, so you had to play to kind of land the ball five, six paces short of the pin. You never really want to get too far above the hole out here at Tucson National because it's difficult with some of these downhill putts with the amount of break you've got to play.

So yeah, a couple of times hitting the ball very close. Certainly I think also on No. 11, making birdie there, and then I know I didn't birdie the par-5 12th, but the wedge into 13 where I hit it about a foot or eight inches, that was huge, too, because the guys were making birdies. Scott was making birdies, Kirk was making birdies, so I had to keep pace.

Q. Was there any question about hitting driver on 17?

MARK O'MEARA: No. I have to hit driver. I mean, I have to hit a good drive to make sure -- if I hit it up in the air and I hit a little draw, it's going to be perfect because it was a little downwind off the right and I knew I could carry the water.

I think the biggest one was certainly making birdie there and then having the lead, but even on 18 I think maybe Mitch wanted me to hit 3-wood, but I'm like, "Listen, I feel like I hit my driver straighter than I hit any other club." Not that I drive it that great all the time, I hit a few loose ones today, but I piped it on 18, so I felt good about that.

Q. You indicated last year that maybe you were done playing the Masters?

MARK O'MEARA: I was done. Last year was my last year at Augusta National.

Q. And does this change your mind?

MARK O'MEARA: No. I've already let Augusta National know earlier this year. They asked me if I wanted to come back and play. I had a great ride there. Certainly, to be a Masters champion, make a putt on the 18th green to win a very special tournament, and I just felt like it was time for me to walk away. I'll be there all week long, but I'll let the young kids bomb it around there. I'll watch them, it will be fun.

Q. And what family did you have out here?

MARK O'MEARA: It was just myself and Mitch Windsor, my caddie. I played with a young man named Toppie Hogan, who went to U of A. He played on the golf team last year, he was a hockey player. Played with he and his father in the Father-Son they invited me to come and stay at their house. So I owe a lot to the Hogan family, too, to Brian, Chris, that let me use their house this week so it was kind of nice. Basically it was just Mitch and I in the house all week long and we had Toppie and Neve, his girlfriend, over. He's turned pro now, so I've been trying to help him a little bit get started with his career.

Q. Did you ever birdie eight holes in a row when you were younger?

MARK O'MEARA: No.

Q. Seven?

MARK O'MEARA: Maybe seven, but never eight.

Q. You got a --

MARK O'MEARA: I don't know. You know, it's always nice to have a lead, like we talked about yesterday after Saturday's round, but you've still got to go out there and play well on Sunday, and fortunately I did today.