

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**March 1, 2019**



**WILLIE WOOD (-7)**

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**Q. Did you hit all 18 fairways?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** No. I missed No. 3 by that far, and I missed another one by about that far.

**Q. Pretty good day.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I drove it pretty well. The fairways seem to be a little softer. They have -- I think the overseed is thicker because they're actually holding the drives pretty easily. 18's a lot easier into the wind to drive it because it makes the fairway wider. I can't drive it through.

**Q. You can't?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I cannot drive it through to the left.

**Q. You hit a pretty good second shot.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** That was a good second shot, yes.

**Q. And your up-and-down on 17, pretty good finish.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Yes.

**Q. Have you been playing well coming in?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** This is my first tournament of the year. I played -- I've been living in Phoenix the last five years for winter, wintertime, so I have gotten a lot of practice in and hit the ball pretty well. You just never know, though.

**Q. I mean, for you a 66 here today, is that a --**

**WILLIE WOOD:** No, I've never done very good here.

**Q. Really?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** When I was a kid, yeah, of course. I did good everywhere when I was a kid. Around town here, I've never contended at a Tucson Open, so I'm delighted at how I played today. Beautiful day and very calm winds, great temperature.

**Q. The four or five times you played here in this event, you haven't broken 70 yet.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** You're right. I didn't know if that was true or not, but it did cross my mind, yeah. I think last year I shot two 70s and a 76.

**Q. Yeah.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Last year I was coming off of knee replacement. It was my first tournament back from that so, I was actually pretty happy with --

**Q. You don't even have a limp.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** It's repaired nicely, yeah. You could tell it yesterday, I was wearing shorts yesterday. You could see the --

**Q. The big zipper?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** You could see the scar, that's right.

**Q. Was your dad the pro here when you were a kid?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Well, no. We moved from Louisiana and he quit his job, so he moved out here without a job. For a while he was teaching here, I believe, and then he got the head pro job down at Sierra Vista, Pueblo del Sol, so I think maybe he worked in the shop a little bit, but he taught some here.

**Q. You guys lived over by Savino?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Yes. It was a long commute. There's no quick way to get here from there. I think Snyder Road still doesn't go through. That would have cut off 15 minutes.

**Q. Did you worry about getting an exemption here?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Yes. Yeah, they've been -- the Conquistadors have been great to me over the past decade. They gave me some spots during the Tucson Open when I didn't have exempt status. So I was prepared to come here and Monday qualify. If I wasn't going to make it, I was going to work buckets.

**Q. You were going to what?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Work buckets.

**Q. Yeah?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I was. I had -- my friend is a Conquistador and he cooks breakfasts down there and I was going to stay and work buckets. I'm glad I'm not working buckets.

**Q. I looked this up, the first time you played in the pro-am in the Tucson Open, it was Willie Mays was in it and Gerald Ford.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Yeah, my group had Don Sutton. I played with Bill Rogers.

**Q. You remember that?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Don Sutton. We were supposed to play with Jesse Owens and he got sick, and we had Don Zimmer. I don't remember the fourth. Yeah, that was a star-studded pro-am. It was a Joe Garagiola tournament that just had tons of celebrities.

**Q. Oh, yeah. Willie Mays. Does any of your family still live here?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** My sister does, yes. And I've stayed with her in the past, but she actually moved yesterday up to Dove Mountain from her home 15 minutes from here west. She was in boxes and everything.

**Q. You didn't help?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I did not even volunteer to help. Thank goodness she didn't ask.

**Q. What does she do here?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** She's retired.

**Q. Oh, good.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** She was a teacher for a long time. She taught kids with disabilities, yeah. I don't know what the proper way to phrase it.

**Q. So after you shoot a good round like this, the first thing you hear is Mark O'Meara birdied eight holes in a row?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** You know, I didn't know how he -- I just knew he was 8 under through 9.

**Q. Through 9?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** That's fantastic.

**Q. Yeah.**

**WILLIE WOOD:** That's a good streak.

**Q. You think you'll stay at this for the next four, five, six years?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I'm 58. That's asking a lot. I'm hitting it shorter and shorter. You know, I've traveled a lot in my life, so I don't know about -- I would like to get to 60. I would like to play until I'm 60. That's two years.

**Q. Are your mom and dad still living?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** No, both are passed.

**Q. What did your dad do after Pueblo del Sol?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** He moved to Oklahoma and spent time there and got a head pro job in the city.

**Q. A golf job?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Yes.

**Q. You probably get asked this and hate this question, but was the highlight of your career winning the first Champions Tour event?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Well, I won a PGA TOUR event in '96, which was big, but the most exciting was the Champions event at Dick's in '12. Just the way it happened, a putt to force a playoff, and then I won in playoff, so I think it was the most exciting thing for me.

**Q. Even more so than when you were a kid winning all this stuff?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** I think when you're a kid you take it for granted. You don't realize that the opportunities aren't going to be there that much. When you're a kid, you think it's going to happen all the time, you feel invincible. I think I appreciated it more when I won at Dick's and I got on a hot streak and I won in Hawaii about a month later. That was a nice little streak.

**Q. How's your son doing at Oklahoma State?**

**WILLIE WOOD:** Pretty good. I was the assistant coach last week in Palm Springs. They got beat, they lost to LSU, so I got fired. I was the volunteer assistant coach and we got beat. But he's doing fine. He's a fifth-year senior. He's going to go through Canadian Tour School next month. Actually, it's this month, at the end of this month, and hopefully that's where he'll play this summer. You can go through it as an amateur and not lose your amateur status or eligibility and turn pro in June, June 1th.