

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**October 17, 2019**



**WOODY AUSTIN**

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**LAURA VESCOVI:** All right. We're here with Woody Austin. Woody is the defending champion of the Dominion Energy Charity Classic. Welcome back to the Country Club of Virginia.

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Thank you.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** How does it feel to be back, looking ahead at defending your title here?

**WOODY AUSTIN:** It's always nice to come back to a place that obviously you have some good memories, especially when they're memories that are only a year old as opposed to like, say, Flint when they were 20-some years old. It's fun.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** You've been playing exceptionally well. You have 11 consecutive top-20s and you were certainly in contention last week at the SAS Championship. You're No. 8 in the Charles Schwab Cup Playoffs. What's been working in your game lately?

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Really, it's just more of the old, I guess the young me coming back a little bit and playing consistent golf. That was my staple, that was the reason why I was able to stay on Tour for the 20 years was I'm just real consistent. When I'm playing well, I don't shoot a lot of low rounds like some of the guys do, but I don't shoot a lot of high rounds. Right now I'm not shooting over par on any round, even when I'm playing bad, so that's the key for me is to just keep staying consistent and if I make some putts like I did last week on Friday, I'm always going to have a chance.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** And then the James River course, what is it about this course that plays well to you and that you like about it?

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Well, I like the fact that there's rough. The fairways aren't real narrow, but we do have rough here. It's a rarity that we play with any serious rough, and when you have bermuda rough, the ball sits down. Most of the time we play, we play with overseeded rye and so the ball sits up, it really doesn't sit down. It's nice to play courses where if you do hit a bad shot, you've got a tough shot because of the bermuda.

So that's one of the big things, and then it's one of the better courses we play from a distance standpoint. We've got long par 3s. No. 8, 17, 14, they're all long iron par 3s and it's rare for us to play a bunch of long iron shots. There's just a lot of good stuff to it.

**Q. So this is the fourth time you've played the tournament here. How much of an advantage does that give you and the others who have played it over some. One like**

**Retief, who's coming into this, Chris DiMarco, coming in for the first time? Do you have a leg up on them?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Yeah, but it's not that big. We're not talking about a golf course that has nuances to it. It's not like you're having to figure out certain layups. There's not hazards off the tee that you can't see that you're confused by. The par 5s are not short, so it's not like you have to play extra strategically on the par 5s.

Retief actually has an advantage as far as the par 5s because I can't get to No. 9 unless I kill it twice. I can't get to No. 6 unless I kill it twice. He's going to get there no problem on both of those, so he really actually has an advantage from the standpoint of his length. And the fact that there's no goofy holes. I guess the only real hole that we would have an advantage on is trying to figure out is 14.

**Q. Do you keep your yardage books from years past?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Usually I do.

**Q. Do you use it?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Yeah, usually you do. I even have my yardage books from 1996 on the regular tour probably still. Don't have yardage books for this week, I haven't had my yardage books this year because they changed the rule on the yardage books so you can't have your old yardage book. So this year you have all brand new yardage books because we're not allowed to use our old yardage books, but starting next year I'll have this year's yardage book. So it's kind of a unique year that normally I just grab my old yardage book, but I haven't grabbed any old yardage books this year because of the new rule, you're not allowed to use them.

**Q. So you can't go back to it in your hotel room and look at it?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Oh, sure. I mean, I could write down notes and what have you, but it's a lot easier to just pull out your old yardage book as opposed to -- because even though the books are pretty similar, they always try to tweak them a little bit and change them. It's just easier to have what, you know, like this year's book.

**Q. Do you have expectations having won here and having played so well? Do you have higher expectations of yourself this week than you might have had in the past?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** No, I don't have any higher expectations than I always do. I expect to do well, I expect to play well. If I don't, I'm going to be very mad at myself like I always am.

The only thing that it changes is the fact that you know you've done it. It doesn't change your expectations, because if you're here not expecting to play well and win, then you shouldn't be here in the first place.

**Q. Kind of expanding on that, some people maybe start well, some finish well, but how do you kind of approach that day one aspect in terms of getting the tournament out to the start that you want?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Well, Friday's the important round, it really is. The fact that we only play three rounds doesn't give us the luxury of having a so-so Friday because every tournament we play, there's very few golf courses we play -- which this happens to be one of them, though, which is nice -- that nobody goes ballistically low because of what I said. It's a much tougher golf course, the rough, what have you. But you can't have a so-so Friday when you only have two days after that.

Now, if you're playing Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, then you give yourself that little bit of cushion, but the fact we only play three days, Friday's vital.

**Q. So what are you looking at in terms of those first nine holes, what are kind of your expectations usually?**

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Well, you know, just to get off to a good start, make some birdies as early as possible, make the turn under par. That's the goal.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** Perfect. Well, thank you all for being here. Thank you, Woody.

**WOODY AUSTIN:** Thanks.