

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
November 1, 2019

CHRIS DiMARCO (-4)



Q. Just heard Sluman's caddie say "great putting." Did you feel the same way out there today?

CHRIS DiMARCO: You know, I feel like both Jeff and I probably left a few out there. We hit a lot of good shots, we hit a lot of good putts that didn't go in. I made four birdies and no bogeys, so when you do that, you can score pretty well around here. And it helped going out early, being one of the first groups, the greens are perfect. And I hit a lot of fairways, I think I only missed one green all day. Made a couple good little come-backers for pars.

It was a good day. I have a lot of good memories on this golf course, Tiger's event back in the mid 2000s, so I know the course, I like the way it sets up, I'm hitting the ball really well and I'm putting good.

Q. You had your low on the Champions Tour a couple weeks ago, tied for sixth. Do you feel like maybe the game's rounding into shape and kind of getting your feet kind of on the ground here in the last half?

CHRIS DiMARCO: I think that definitely come June, around the U.S. Open time, I made a switch to a different driver. I went to the Ping G-410 and my driving got a lot better, I'm hitting a lot more fairways, put myself in play. When you're in play and you're not scrambling, you can kind of go for greens, and I've always said it's a lot easier to putt for birdie than it is for par. So I'm putting for a lot more birdies than I was.

You know what, the main thing is I'm starting to feel comfortable out here. I'm feeling like I belong again, I'm feeling like I know what to do when I'm nervous now, I know what to do when I'm playing good, how to get it in with a good number and not hold back. I'm at 4 under, I'll probably be in 10th or 12th place by the end of the round. These guys are so good, haven't even started their round, especially going to the back nine when you have three par 5s to go.

I left a couple out there on 11 and 13, hit some good putts, but it was all in all a good day. You can stay away from trouble out here. There's some holes that can jump up and grab you, so for me to get out of here unscathed with no bogeys is pretty good.

Q. Talk a little bit more about the adjustment in terms of coming out. It's obviously a tour where you've got to start fast and keep playing fast. How long has it taken and just the adjustment to getting back and playing, being in contention?

CHRIS DiMARCO: That's what it is. It's like anything else. For me, I did the Golf Channel

for almost three and a half years, so there was not much competitive golf in there. To get away from the game in that aspect was a lot. I didn't play much golf in those three and a half years, either. I probably only kept my score on a card maybe 20 times.

So the fact that I had to come back out here, last year they threw me right in, my first tournament was with Fred Couples and Darren Clarke right out of the gate in Seattle, where Fred's Mr. Everything. So that probably was one of the most nervous rounds I've played since maybe the Ryder Cup. So just to get in the mix there, it was funny, it's a perfect example. I was kind of just settling myself down. I parred the first six holes, I birdied seven. I was like, all right, I got a birdie, looked on the board and John Huston was 7 under through nine. So I'm like, oh, my gosh.

Really, there is no time to be nervous, there is no time to let nerves take a shot for me out here because there's some really good players out here and these guys, they all feel comfortable, so you don't have time to feel uncomfortable.

Q. Obviously your objective this week is to play as well as you can, but realistically, what was the expectation coming in?

CHRIS DiMARCO: I have nothing to lose, so I can fire at some pins. If I finished fifth or if I finish 50th, I'm going home next week. For me, I need to finish probably top four to get into Phoenix. That is certainly a goal, it's something I want to do, but I am a realist. My best finish out here is a tie for sixth, so I know I've got to best what I've done.

I'm going to go out and give it my all and try to fire at the pins and make sure I try to get all my putts to the hole and give every shot a chance. Playing with guys like Slu always helps. It was a great pairing for me today. To go out there with one of my best friends and to go around the golf course and play some golf, both of us cheering each other on and rooting for each other, that's a good thing. Played the same pace, it was just a good, fun day out there.

Q. Do you remember what your best finish was here at Tiger's event?

CHRIS DiMARCO: Second or third, I can't remember. I know that I was up there a couple times. I know I played with Tiger a bunch. Back then it was -- not back then, but it was just I look at some of these holes now and I'm like, wow, these fairways are tight. I never looked at anything. Wherever I looked, the ball was going so it didn't really matter. To get into this tournament back then, you had to be one of the best players in the world, and I felt like I was one of the best players in the world back then. I feel like I still have a ways to go to get myself to being one of the best players out here, but I feel like I'm definitely trending in the right way.