

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
April 21, 2019



SCOTT McCARRON (-7)

CHRIS RICHARDS: Congratulations to Scott McCarron, winner of the 2019 Mitsubishi Electric Classic. Scott, this is now your third win here at TPC Sugarloaf, 1997 and 2001 and now this year. What does it mean to come back and win for a third time?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, obviously it's a golf course I like, Chris. You know, I got to play here my first time with Greg Norman, who designed the golf course. When we were coming here I called him for a practice round. He kind of showed me some of the lines off the tees, where you could go where you could get some more yardage and where you need to hit it on layups, those type of things. He taught me a lot on how to play this golf course. So I was able to take some of that knowledge and I played well that first year in '97, ended up winning, and then won again in 2001. I also had a couple opportunities where I played in the final group and didn't get it done, the year Mickelson won.

To come here, and we had the new nine, which I had never seen before, which is a very difficult nine. Again, this place is just very special to me. When I first came in through the gates, you see all the big, beautiful homes and everybody's well-manicured yards, and the golf course is just fantastic, so it's a golf course I love coming to.

CHRIS RICHARDS: It was a very difficult, trying week with the weather. So looking back, it's probably -- you had a difficult start to your round today, kind of fitting of the tournament. How were you able to get back on track after that tough start?

SCOTT McCARRON: It's interesting, even the years I won here, we had some tough weather. We played 36 holes one day, very windy conditions, cold both times. So to be able to come out here and have kind of similar conditions, I knew that I had to be patient. I didn't get off to the best start, three-putted the first hole, but I came back with a good birdie on 2 and then had a couple really unfortunate breaks on 3, the par 5, and made double.

So lost the lead and all of a sudden now I'm basically tied for the lead. Kind of refocused me, stay patient, make some birdies, keep plodding along, do what you know you need to do, and I did a pretty good job of that after that, after the start.

CHRIS RICHARDS: In a way is it easier to stay patient when the situation dictates that you absolutely have to, you can't force it?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, certainly when you get conditions like this being as windy, it's very difficult to get the ball close. When this golf course is playing long, the Zoysia grass when it's wet, the ball isn't rolling, so this golf course is playing long. Some of the par 5s you can't really reach. So I knew that I just had to keep staying patient. If I keep making pars,

make a few birdies, I thought it would be difficult -- if I could play 2 or 3 under after that start, it would be difficult for guys to catch me just because how hard it was.

CHRIS RICHARDS: And this is your ninth win now on PGA TOUR Champions. What's it like to keep that win total, keep on climbing?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, you know it's fantastic. I'm having so much fun playing on the PGA TOUR Champions. This is like a new lease on life for me for my golf career, but I also know that there's an end in site. Because of that, I'm putting everything I can into these whatever, 10, 15 years. Langer's at 61 playing great, so if I can do that and stay in good shape, maybe I could have a career as long as him. I don't think I can win as much as he does, this guy's been phenomenal. But I'm having a very nice career. I'm having so much fun out here. My wife's traveling with me a bunch and we try to make it fun everywhere we go. I think because of that I've been able to be successful so far.

Q. On 3 it looked like --

SCOTT McCARRON: Can we talk about something better than 3, Steve?

Q. Looked like you had to turn your back and have a little talk with yourself?

SCOTT McCARRON: Again, it was just stay patient, stay patient, that was it. I hit it in the bunker on the right there up against the lip and I had to kind of gouge it out only about 60 yards. I had almost 200 yards in and I hit a pretty good 7-iron but just caught the tree. Again, you catch the tree there, it could go out the bounds, it could go anywhere. It came back right. I didn't have a very easy chip, but I had a good chip I thought but it hit a ball mark and it just stopped right there. Again, I hit a putt that was too hard. These greens are so fast and have such subtle undulations that I just misread it and that was the way it went. Made double. But I came back strong the next hole and birdied the next hole, the par 3, so that was bit.

Q. Looked like you hit that next (inaudible.)

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, the next was the par 3. 8-iron, I hit a beautiful 8-iron in there 12 feet, made that for birdie. Next hole was a 3-wood. This golf course, you've got to put yourself in position. I don't hit a lot of drivers here just because I'm trying to avoid some of these bunkers and trying to avoid trouble. That new nine I'm hitting a lot of 3-woods off tees.

Q. We'll go to the back nine then.

SCOTT McCARRON: Yes.

Q. The short par 4?

SCOTT McCARRON: Thirteen.

Q. With your length, do you almost look at that as a par 3 and a half?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yes, absolutely. I've hit that green quite a few times when I needed to. I think in '97, 2001 I might have drove the green and then that led to a victory. So I knew if I hit a good drive there, I could probably get that. The tee was up just a little bit, but because the Zoysia's so wet right in the front, if I could fly it right into that 10 yards short of the green I thought it might just kind of hit softly and just get on it. It did. I mean, I had 18 feet coming down the hill for eagle and that was a big turning point for me getting to 6 under. And then going to 15, another hole that I've had success at. I've birdied it I think in '97 and '01 when I went on to win, and that was a really difficult hole today with a good drive. I think I hit 8-iron in there just below the hole about 15 feet and made that.

Q. When you look back on it, where did you say, okay, this is where I won the tournament?

SCOTT McCARRON: I would say I won the tournament really the first day because I played so good, shot 4 under in such difficult conditions. I mean, it was so cold and so windy. That 4 under, I only finished at 7 under, that's where I would say probably led me to victory this week.

But again, having said that, today I would say a couple things. No. 4, when I made birdie on that par 3 just to get back after the double. Again, just knowing that you can make birdies. And then 13, 15 for sure. I still didn't know exactly where I stood until I got to 16 green, I saw that those guys were at 5 and I was at 7, had a two-shot lead. So I was just kind of keeping an eye on them seeing what they were doing, and when neither of them eagled the last hole or birdied the last hole, I knew I could probably wrap this thing up.

Q. Could you compare the golfer today that you are, the one today as the last one that won in '01?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, I can. The golfer today, I'm a lot more patient than I was when I was on Tour. I felt when I was on the PGA TOUR I had to play my absolute best to win, so I put a lot of pressure on myself to do that, where I really didn't. I had to play well and put yourself in positions, and sometimes you win and sometimes somebody plays better than you. But I think I beat myself up a little bit too much because I put too much pressure on it.

Now it's more of stay in the hunt, have a chance to win with three, four, five holes and see what happens. And when I do that, I know that I don't have to hit the heroic shot. I can put the ball in the fairway, put it on the green, I can make a 20- or 30-footer. I don't have to hit it five feet to make. I think the golfer today is a lot more patient and that's why I'm probably playing better now than I ever have in my life.

Q. Does this set you up nicely, a win early in the year, to kind of make a push?

SCOTT McCARRON: Absolutely. I felt I let one go at the Hoag Classic this year in Newport. I felt like I should have won that tournament. Three-putted the last hole to miss the playoff. That certainly ticked me off a little bit. But winning sets that up. I've had a 5th, a 2nd, a 3rd and now with the victory, I think we maybe take over the Schwab Cup early in the season, which is great.

That's my goal, to win the Schwab Cup at the end the year, try to win and put myself in position as many times as I can. These guys are so good out here, these guys are practicing, staying in shape and they go low. This was one of those weeks that was just very, very difficult because of the weather.

Q. Certainly didn't (no microphone.)

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah, exactly.

Q. Have you considered --

SCOTT McCARRON: Moving to Sugarloaf, yeah. It was interesting, early in my career when I first came here, I thought I would never be able to afford a house like this, the ones that are in here. Then after a couple years this certainly would have been someplace that I would like to have lived. It's a great spot, fairly close to the airport, great restaurants around. Frankie's is one of my favorite restaurants and we'll probably go tonight and celebrate here. Stuart Cink loves it here and it's one of my favorite places we play.

Q. I guess you could look back on it and say this place has put a lot of food on your table?

SCOTT McCARRON: Obviously, yes, it did, it did. This tournament has meant a lot to me in my career and also personally.

Q. And last thing for me is just your record, I guess only Langer has won more over the period of time that you've won. Do you think that people recognize you as being one of the bona fide stars out here?

SCOTT McCARRON: I don't know about that. I don't know what other people think of me, but I know I have a lot of great friends out here and the camaraderie out here is amazing. We're all happy when our friends win and it's nice to have good friends that I've known for 20 years.

Again, I've won nine times and the only guy that's won more than me is Langer, but you've got a lot of guys out here that have won quite a few times. Kirk Triplett's won quite a few times, Billy Andrade's won quite a few times. Again, we've got to keep plugging away and trying to win and try to win the Schwab Cup.