

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 18, 2019



TOM BYRUM

CHRIS RICHARDS: Welcome, everyone, to the 2019 Sanford International. I'm pleased to be joined by Tom Byrum.

Tom, coming off back-to-back top-10s coming to the South Dakota event where you were born, do you feel like this is a major to you and do you feel like you're peaking for this event?

TOM BYRUM: I don't know about peaking. You know, we just played two golf courses that I really have played well on in the past, so I knew those courses well. This one, of course, I played back in the '80s and early '90s maybe and they've changed it a bit. You know, I'm not quite sure if just the first year was any indication that I need to get a better feel for it, but I'm not putting any extra -- trying not to put any extra pressure on myself to try to do anything extra special other than play the golf course, play my game. It's been good enough here recently, so try to fit that on this golf course and see how I do.

Of course, it's one tournament that if I could pick one, I would love to win this one.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Now, earlier this season Jerry Kelly won in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin, and it meant the world to him. What would it mean to you? It's a little different scenario, but similar.

TOM BYRUM: Yeah, not quite my hometown, but this was kind of the home of South Dakota golf growing up, too. Everything kind of came through Sioux Falls. It would mean a lot. It's such a good following from the state. A lot of people we all see at these tournaments in the wintertime, especially back on the PGA TOUR I would see a lot of people out there. There's always somebody, "Go, South Dakota," and I'll ask them where they're from and they'll tell me the town. Of course, I know most of the towns even though they're small, kind of like what I grew up in.

Yeah, it would be great. I just don't want to go there too far into it and, you know, build it up to the point where I'm so disappointed if it doesn't happen. It would definitely be -- it's on my list.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Now, last year was the first year. Looking back at the crowds, just the entire tournament week, how proud were you of the South Dakota golf community for how it turned out?

TOM BYRUM: Yeah, it was a great turnout last year. Even despite the weather they came out and supported the tournament. I thought it was a huge success. A lot of the players were talking about the tournament even a couple weeks later, they'd come up to me and

make comments about it. I think if we keep that wind down and the cold weather away just a little longer, I think it will be really well received.

CHRIS RICHARDS: All right. I'll open it up to questions.

Q. Tom, do you feel a little more relaxed this year? Last year was the first year in your home state, first major tournament that the state has hosted. A little more relaxed this year?

TOM BYRUM: Yeah, I think so. I think just a little more familiar with everything going on and seeing how everything's turning out. Yeah, kind of getting one under the belt's definitely been a big help. It's definitely a different feeling this year, so maybe that will help.

Q. How much fun is this week? I'm sure people come up to you, "I was your high school science teacher," or "I played golf with you back in 1978." Do you hear a lot of that?

TOM BYRUM: Yeah. Just had lunch with some guys that were asking me all about did I know so-and-so back in the day when I was playing high school golf. Of course I knew most of them.

Ran into a girl that her grandfather and I used to play golf back in Pierre all the time, so he always talked about my brother and me. There's a lot of stories like that it seems like and there's probably more out there that I haven't heard yet. And unfortunately we can't remember them all from when we were 16 years old, but family names, we can still remember a lot of that. And if they were a character, for sure they stick in your mind.

Q. What did you learn last year that you bring this year approach-wise as far as the golf game goes? What are you maybe changing, keeping the same, hope goes better?

TOM BYRUM: Well, I think I'm coming into this playing a little better, too. I'm not going to change anything. The last two weeks have been, you know, I'm trending the right way. I'm just going to try to keep playing like that and just try to make good decisions on this golf course.

I think last year maybe I was possibly forcing some things, I don't know. I just didn't get a good feel for the -- for playing the course and I think part of it was a little distracted, maybe not thinking about my game enough and thinking about other things. But this year I think I can be a little more focused. Like you were saying, it's a little more of a relaxed year.

Q. Tom, pro-ams, obviously you're out there with people who don't play a lot of golf in some cases, but I'm sure that you're asked a lot of the time for advice on this or that. How do you try to help these people with their games?

TOM BYRUM: Well, sometimes, you know, it can work both ways. If they ask, I'll help them, but a lot of times even if they're struggling I try not to say too much. If they feel like they're not playing as well as they usually do, you can tell that it's the atmosphere maybe, that they're not handling that, so you can't really give a lesson for that.

So unless they ask, I don't say too much, but if it's obvious and it's been a long first nine or first 12 holes, I might say, all right, let's try something here just for the fun of it, maybe a second ball just one time.

But I found, too, that if I jump in too early and it doesn't work, they're not real appreciative of that, either. You know, I don't jump in there and give lessons too often.

Q. Did some of the other guys come and ask you about the course or what did you think of the course? You said it's changed a lot.

TOM BYRUM: Well, like 8 and 9 weren't here when I played before, and then what is that, 13, 14 is a new hole, 14, 15 for sure, that's all different.

I was trying to think yesterday, I remembered two holes over here, but I can't even remember. I know there was a couple par 4s over there that were short but they were still -- they weren't what we have here. So just a few holes that have changed and kind of changed the routing a little bit, I guess.

Yeah, they've asked me, you know, guys that haven't come asked me about the course and I'll tell them what I think. It's usually positive because it is, it's a good course. It's not a long hitter's course, it's not necessarily a short hitter's course. I think Steve Stricker kind of proved that. You have to play good golf to score on this course.

CHRIS RICHARDS: All right. Thank you very much, Tom. Good luck this week.