

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 19, 2019



RETIEF GOOSEN

CHRIS RICHARDS: Good morning, everyone. Retief, welcome to the Sanford International. Assess your season so far. You have one win. Have you gotten comfortable out here with the 54-hole events and just the pace and the lifestyle out here on the PGA TOUR Champions?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, so far it's been great fun. I would have liked to have had more than one win. I had my chances to win in Wisconsin and didn't quite get that, but it was great to win at Akron.

Yeah, so far it's been great. Got off to a slow start in the middle of the year, or the beginning of the year should I really say, and things slowly got better and better. I think I'm hitting the ball pretty good, I think I just need to get a hot putter going again. That's how you're going to win out here, making putts.

CHRIS RICHARDS: This is the second year PGA TOUR Champions has been in Sioux Falls. What have you heard from the players about this tournament? The players who played last year, what have they told you about this tournament?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, the golf course looks beautiful, it's in great condition. I understand there was some bad weather here a few weeks ago. So yeah, I'm very much looking forward to getting out there and playing. You know, just by looking at it and getting a feel of the golf course even before you actually play it, you know, you sort of get a feeling if you're going to like it or not and I already like it. It looks great.

And I see there's quite a bit of rough out there, so you're going to have to drive it pretty good, keeping the ball in the fairways. Par 70, you know, only two par 5s, so scoring would probably be a little bit more difficult to go low not having that extra two par 5s.

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

Q. Retief, as the new guy on the block, are you getting glares from other players on the greens? What's the reception been like, because you're taking money out of their pockets.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, that's the whole thing, you know. It's part of the game. You've got to come out here and try to take the money out of their pockets, but some weeks they take it out of your pocket. The guys are extremely competitive still out here. They've got their competitive spirit. All the guys here are champions; they've won events, lots of events. You know when you tee it up here you're going to have to go low to win. So far, as I said, my

putter is just not quite behaving.

And I'm looking forward to tough golf courses. Tougher golf courses I seem to do a little better on.

Q. How would you describe the difference between the PGA TOUR and the Champions Tour?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, the difference is there's only 78 players you've got to beat, not 145 players, to start off. You play three rounds except the majors. The golf course on a PGA TOUR is longer and you have deeper rough; the main difference I find is the rough. On the PGA TOUR, generally you hit it in the rough and you struggle to get on the green. And yeah, generally you can pretty much get to the green except a few events that you've got really deep rough.

Yeah, obviously the depth of the fields is so much stronger on the regular Tour, but otherwise it's the same game. You've got to hit it down the middle of the fairway, hit it on the green, make the putt. It doesn't matter what tour you play on, you know you've got to go low and play some of your best golf to win.

Q. What drew you to jump in on this event? What attracted you to this and what have you been told about it?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, I've never been up to this part of the country. You know, pretty much 80, 90 percent of the events I'm playing this year is new golf courses for me. So this year I made a good point of it that I want to play every event, get a good feel for every golf course and see if there's anything I would like to change in the schedule next year.

But so far, you know, the Champions Tour, the great thing about it, the events are spread out nicely over the whole season. We're playing until the beginning of November while the PGA TOUR, although they already started their 2020 season, but from January in there's a small space of time that the guys pack in every week playing.

The great thing about the Champions Tour is you play a couple of weeks or two, three weeks and then you have a week or two weeks off and then you go again, so you get enough rest in between to really play all the events.

Q. Can you talk about the quality of play on this tour? I think a lot of people see Senior Tour or whatever and they don't realize how good it is.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah. As I say, it's the same game, you're going to have to make birdie, doesn't matter what tour you play on. The Champions Tour is really underrated a little bit for the quality of golf out here. You know, we've got some good players coming in in the next year or so that hopefully will boost that look of the tour. It's a bit underrated, but I tell you, the tour here is extremely strong, the quality of golf's unbelievable. You've got to

shoot 18 under par for three rounds of golf, you've got to go low to win.

Q. You talk about the putter misbehaving. Have you figured out why putting is so up and down? As fabulous as your career's been, have you figured out why it comes and goes like that? Is it speed, is it line, is it what?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, it probably has become a little bit of mental too for me I think. I didn't putt well at all in Boeing, Seattle, but me and those extreme poa annua greens have never been friends. For some reason I've never really played well on the west coast. That put my confidence back a little bit, that week I putted horrible.

Then last week I putted well for two rounds, and then the one really bad round where I couldn't make anything and then hit it out of bounds on 18 and that will set you back quite a bit.

But putting, you know, it's a funny thing, yeah. I would probably say it's been more I've been struggling with the lines a little bit and not quite trusting my lines.

Q. Retief, is there an art to getting through a pro-am where you can maybe benefit from it competitively and also enjoy yourself?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No, the pro-ams are -- I find pro-ams really good. You get a good feel of the golf course, first of all. It's a practice round, yeah, and you meet some interesting people and people that do great things for the game, or like this week, people that does great things for health.

No, pro-ams are nice. You learn a lot out there. For me, it's a great practice round, getting a good feel of the golf course and the conditions, how the ball reacts on the greens. I have no problems with the pro-ams.

Q. Obviously this is your first time in the event, it's only its second year so it's relatively new on Tour. For you personally, does it give you a little extra energy coming to a new place where people are obviously very eager to see you and the other pros in a place where it's still relatively a new experience, a different kind of energy?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah. I mean, I think all the players love coming to a new event. They want to support the event because sponsors, it's a big decision for them to come in and put up an event. They want to make it successful and if the top guys come and play, the quicker the event will grow in stature. And we've got a great golf course here. I think this event's here to stay for a while.

Q. Could you have imagined all the places and all the things you've gotten to do because of hitting a golf ball, which has culminated into getting into the World Golf Hall of Fame? Congratulations on that, by the way.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, you know, I turned pro when I was nearly 22 and yeah, it's been a long road. Yeah, at the time, you know, you're just trying to make a living and then you start winning tournaments. Then I played heavy schedules around the world and supported the game around the world.

Yeah, it's been a great honor to get inducted in the Hall of Fame for what I've done for the game and be with all those other greats that have done so much for the game. It's a great honor.

Q. What's it like to be in a field where there's a lot of other guys that have also been so honored playing against them?

RETIEF GOOSEN: That's the great thing about the Champions Tour, you come out here and you see guys that won, you know, so many events and majors and World Golf Hall of Famers and still shoot, you know, 65s and less. It's great for the game.

As I say, we've got Ernie coming in next year, Jim Furyk's turning 50, Mickelson's turning 50. Hopefully he'll come and play. Then time goes by quickly, the next seven years and then Tiger will be out here. Maybe we can kick his butt a little bit.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Anything else for Retief? Thank you very much, good luck this week.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Thank you.