

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**August 29, 2019**

**SCOTT McCARRON**



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**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Please welcome two-time defending champion Scott McCarron to the media center. Scott, how does it feel to be back?

**SCOTT McCARRON:** I like the title of two-time defending champion. Let's see if we can make it three.

It feels good to be back. I like this golf course. Obviously I've played well here over the last four, five years. It's amazing what Shaw does for charity in this city. I mean, they're going to try to raise almost \$14 million, last year \$12 million. Raised something like \$32 or \$34 million since the inception of the tournament seven years ago. It's just amazing what Shaw and all the people, all the volunteers have done, Birdies for Charities, to make this such a huge event.

I think on our Tour it's probably one of the biggest and best events. It's so well attended, the fans come out here in droves. The golf course is great. And what's great about this golf course is every hole is by the next hole, the greens are by the tees. So even though you get a lot of people here, it feels really big.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Last year was a really exciting win for you with your hole-in-one. Can you just talk us through that round? It was really exciting to see you win after that shot.

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah, not very often do you make a hole-in-one and then win by a shot, and to come down on the back nine and to hit that shot, it was great. Langer had got up and hit a great 8-iron right before me just about three feet left of the hole, so I saw this perfect ball flight and just kind of visualized that same ball flight with a 9-iron, and after seeing it on TV, it one-hopped right in the hole. And then to go on and keep plugging away and make a few birdies.

I did bogey the next hole and I know Kirk Triplett and Joe Durant had some opportunities coming in. Joe missed a short putt on 17 and neither of them birdied 18, so it was kind of very fortunate for me. I felt lucky to come out on top. I thought for sure we would be in a playoff. So that hole-in-one obviously was the catalyst that put me over the top.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Looking forward to this year, you would be just the ninth player to win three consecutive years in a row now in Tour history. What do you feel about that?

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, obviously not many guys have done it. It's very difficult to do. It's very difficult to win back to back, even more difficult to win three times. This is a golf course I do like. I'm feeling good, I feel like I'm hitting it pretty well, and so I've just got to put

myself in position with nine holes to go and see what happens. I've been able to do that the last two years, put myself in position and play well coming down the stretch, so hopefully we can do that again.

But there's so many great players here. We've got legends and Hall of Famers, and Davis Love is playing this week, he's playing great. Jerry Kelly's kind of right on my tail in the Schwab Cup and I'm playing with him and Davis tomorrow, which will be a lot of fun. Bernhard Langer just turned 62, but he's not slowing down anytime soon. You're going to have to play some really good golf here.

**Q. Scott, why is it so tough to win back to back?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, it's just difficult to win, period. You've got some of the best players that ever played the game playing week in and week out. We've got 79, 80 guys playing and anybody can win. So you've got to play really good golf to get yourself in the hunt.

You know, again, for me it's a matter of just getting myself in position with nine holes to play and see what happens. You can control your emotions, make some birdies, keep the ball in play, not make too many mistakes and you might have a chance. There's other times that guys just go low. Last week, Brandt Jobe, my college roommate, shot 9 under on Sunday to come from seven shots back. Freddie Couples didn't play well on the last day. So it's difficult to win even one event whether to win it back to back.

**Q. Do you feel like winning here last year sort of led to your success this year or carried over to this year?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** You know, anytime you win it helps propel to you keep wanting to win more. I would say coming here and winning back to back was a big deal. I had never done that before, so it gave me a lot of confidence to going into the rest of the season. Towards the end of the year I had a chance with nine holes to play to win the whole Schwab Cup in Phoenix. I think the win here led to me getting myself in positions more often, having chances to win, and then certainly coming up just short I think kind of spring boarded me to want to try to even get up there and win the Schwab Cup.

That's been my goal from the start of the year, it's been my goal since I got on this tour. And it's no secret, I've been telling everybody that's what I want to do. I've been chasing Langer the last few years, I finished fourth, third and second in the Schwab Cup, so I've been getting close. We've got one more spot to go and we're trying to get it done this year.

I've got to play really well over the next eight or nine events to do that. I've got to put myself in position going into the Playoffs to have hopefully a big lead or some type of lead, and if not, I've got to go play well in the Playoffs again really no matter what.

**Q. Scott, how (No microphone.)**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, it certainly is a rivalry, but it's a very friendly rivalry. I've been fortunate to play a lot of golf with him the last few years. We've been in the hunt, we play on Sundays together battling it out. And he's someone that I watch what he's doing, how he picks apart a golf course, how he prepares for a golf tournament, how he practices, how he's working out, how he's eating right.

He really is kind of the ageless wonder. I mean, 62 years old, he's still in great shape. He still has the desire to compete, to win. I think he's got the desire, he wants to beat Hale Irwin's record for most wins and I think that's what's driving him now.

And so our rivalry is very friendly. I text him when he plays well, he texts me when I play well. It really shocked me the first time he did it because he sent some emojis. I didn't think Langer had emoji in him, but he's a very funny guy, great sense of humor, a lot of fun.

And I told him last year -- he came close to shooting his age -- I said, I'll give you one more year, shoot your age and I'm buying you dinner. If you don't do it, you've got to buy me dinner. So now he's 62, he's getting closer. The older he gets, the closer he's going to get to shooting his age. It's a rivalry, but it's a very friendly rivalry.

**Q. (Question about emojis.)**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** A bunch of smiley faces and some other stuff, yeah. And crying faces.

**Q. What's the banter like in the locker room when you arrived kind of with the bulls-eye on your back as the two-time defending champion?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** You know, not too much banter. I mean, the guys might be giving me a little bit of the business just because I've won the last couple years and you're -- I don't really see that very often from me, but like your picture's up in different places and guys will be giving you grief about that.

But most of the guys, especially the guys I play with, want to know what I'm doing on some of the holes, how have I played these holes when we play our practice rounds, how are putts breaking, that type of thing. The guys look at it like maybe I've figured it out a little bit better than most on this golf course, so they may be asking some questions.

But we all give each other a pretty hard time anyways, so it's not much different than me being the two-time champion, I'm still getting grief anyways every week.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Absolutely no, I don't give them -- you know, I do. It's interesting in the golf world and even on the PGA TOUR, the veteran players didn't go out of their way to

help the younger players, but if the younger player asked a veteran player, they would give them anything they needed.

So even out here it's kind of the same thing. We're not giving unsolicited advice, but if someone asks, hey, help me with my chipping or help me with one shot in particular or one hole, how you play it, we're going to give them our advice. But we're not going to go out there and just give out free advice to everybody, but if someone asks, absolutely, guys seem to help.

**Q. It's unique that the rookie players, the younger guys coming in (inaudible).**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah, certainly you're looking at guys coming up. You know, Retief Goosen has come up this year, obviously won his first major. The guy hits it a mile. He's still so smooth.

We've got some guys coming out next year, Tim Herron's coming out, Rod Pampling's coming out, so you're looking to see how those guys are playing. Mike Weir, there's some of those guys are playing some of the Korn Ferry Tour. So we're looking at some of the scores, how are they doing, are they being competitive, those type of things, because they're going to be the guys to compete with.

I mean, as the years go on, yeah, we get older -- I'm 54 now and then all of a sudden I'll be 58 and there will be a 50-year-old, so I've got to stay in shape to be able to compete with the younger guys.

So you're always looking to see who's coming up next and you're looking to see are they competing right now, are they playing, are they playing some Tour events, are they playing some Korn Ferry Tour events to get ready, because if you don't, you're going to get run over out here. You've got to come out ready to play, you've got to come out ready to score and go low, because if you don't, these guys are going to just run right over you.

**Q. During your PGA TOUR career you wouldn't be the guy who showed up every week and everyone said, oh, that's one of the guys to watch. How have you kind of gotten used to that position, being one of the front runners of the guys at the top?**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Well, it's interesting, I still don't really feel that way, you know, one of the guys to watch because you're playing against guys that are in the Hall of Fame and these guys are legends. I had a nice career on the PGA TOUR, won three times, had chances in majors. I felt I underachieved for what I felt I should have done, but looking back on it, I mean, I didn't -- I couldn't even play on my college team and then quit golf for four years. So most people look at it as an overachiever.

But I've got very high goals, so I want to do more. So I'm not really -- when I come to an event, I'm not really looking at I'm the guy to beat. I'm looking at, you know, Langer and Goosen and Vijay and Davis, the guys that had Hall of Fame-type careers that are these

legends and that's where most of the focus usually is week in and week out.

But obviously I've been playing well and so it's fun to come in and do some media interviews and have your picture up on a few boards here and there. It's fun, it's nice and it makes you feel good. It kind of gives you a little confidence like, oh, yeah, I'm playing pretty good out here and I'm having fun.

That's the most important thing, I'm really enjoying my time out here on the PGA TOUR Champions. It feels like second family. Not only all the players, but all the people that work for the PGA TOUR, like Jackie and knucklehead Bret over there. We feel like it's kind of part of the family. Miller Brady does a great job, Jimmy Gabrielsen does a fantastic job, and so it's kind of like we calling it the traveling circus.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Well, this week you are the guy to beat, so that's good. Any other questions?

**Q. There's no Canadian born players this year for the first time.**

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Yeah, my mom's from Kaslo, Kootenay Lakes area. Still a Canadian citizen, so I am half Canadian. And I've got a lot of relatives still up in Canada.

Canada has a very special place in my heart naturally with my mom, but I used to vacation up in the Kootenay Lakes and my first professional golf Tour was the Canadian Golf Tour. So Brandt Jobe and I, who won last week, my college roommate, we traveled from Victoria Island all the way to Prince Edward Island playing on the Canadian Golf Tour back in 1993, '92, '93. It was where I got my first professional experience and it really -- this tour, Canadian Tour, now the Mackenzie Tour, prepared me to play on the PGA TOUR. We had four-day events, we had a pro-am every tournament that we went to, the town, we had media to deal with, we had fans, so that really got me prepared to play on the PGA TOUR. So I love coming back up here and it has a very special place in my heart.

**JACKIE SERVAIS:** Great, thank you, Scott. Good luck this week.

**SCOTT McCARRON:** Thank you.