

FRED COUPLES

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back. We have missed you. Let's start off talking about what have you been up to the last couple months?

FRED COUPLES: I have been home, probably like everyone else, wearing masks and staying away from anyone I didn't know. And I have been playing a lot of golf, and really just kind of watching the news. My Northwest is falling apart. I grew up in Seattle, so I have been paying a lot of attention to that. And really focusing on coming here. I didn't want to go to Flint, which is one of my all-time favorite Tour courses. That was probably my mistake.

But here this week at the Bridgestone, it's one of the epic golf courses that you can possibly play, and I'm looking forward to playing. And I have heard a lot of people talking about no fans, so I'm kind of interested to see what that's like, although I have played probably 70 rounds since March with no fans. So I am kind of used to it now. But in a tournament you're trying to focus and play. And maybe it will be great, maybe it won't. But I'm excited to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk about your time here. Obviously you're a past winner of this event, spent a lot of time here on this course. What do you remember about the time you won and the success you have had here?

FRED COUPLES: Well, it's a very hard course. And I played yesterday. So that was kind of good to have these tests, because I got here way earlier than I would have ever showed up to a golf tournament.

But I did play with Pernice yesterday, and I watched him play a few of the holes. The course is playing fast. You have to somehow hit the ball in the fairways, and some of the fairways it seems like I rarely hit. So I'm trying to figure out the golf course today. It's a little overcast, I don't know if it's going to rain this week or not. But at the moment, I love this course. I have good memories. I have never figured out how to play it, but I have some very good rounds in, and not too many mediocre rounds. But it's a good ball-striker's course. It's in perfect shape.

THE MODERATOR: Being a two-time Players Champion, what does it mean to be able to win here and then go back to that event?

FRED COUPLES: Well, that's my goal. That's my only shot of getting back to Ponte Vedra, is to win this tournament. I think that's the great thing the Tour does. Out of the

blue I saw Tanigawa play. I forgot he won the Senior PGA, and he played last week. And it's got to be a lot of fun. I don't know if that's the first PGA he's ever played in, because he didn't really turn pro until he turned 50, but I enjoyed seeing that. And for me, if I could win here Sunday and know I'm going back to Ponte Vedra, that would be a huge deal.

Q. Besides playing golf, did you become a cooking fanatic or anything else, or --

FRED COUPLES: No, we --

THE MODERATOR: -- find some new wines or anything?

FRED COUPLES: No, no. We started watching old movies. We started -- Hunter's 12, so we started watching kids' movies, a lot of Netflix, as everyone else. But I usually -- I don't -- I have never cooked. So Suzanne cooked, I did the dishes. And a lot of ordering out. But I didn't feel -- I was never really worried about it.

We went to the desert right after Newport, the Hoag Classic, and stayed almost till mid-June. And then went back to Newport, and you would have thought there wasn't a coronavirus. People were everywhere. And I'm not going to say no one cared, but there was a lot going on. Then they kind of shut California down and then it got a little serious. Because when you're in Palm Springs, you kind of don't see the world, except on TV. And everything was beautiful there. And it was beautiful in Newport, once people started paying attention.

But things have got to change. I mean, Suzanne has a child who I have been with five years, and this -- he goes through school so fast because he's very smart, and by 10:00 o'clock he's done. So we played basketball, we played golf, tennis. So it was kind of like enjoyable. But he needs to be around kids. So we're trying to figure out for him this year what to do. But I can see families that both parents work and they have three kids, what do they do? Leave their kids in the house? So something's got to get going here. And then they open up schools and everyone gets the COVID. So it's just -- it's different. But I have done nothing major except play a little golf and enjoy the time off, even though it's a bad time to enjoy time off.

Q. How is his golf game?

FRED COUPLES: It's getting better. He's mostly football and basketball. Golf he plays just because it's in front of him. But he's good. He can hit it around.

Q. Fred, you had a good start to the year this year on PGA Tour Champions. Do you feel like -- you told us you have been playing a bunch. Do you feel like you kind of can get back to where you were at the start of the year?

FRED COUPLES: That's a great question. I was playing very well, and not meaning to

get into it, I was practicing and right there in every event, and then the letdown of not continuing to play. And so now we're here.

I will be honest, the flight killed me. I didn't hit the ball very well yesterday at all. But yeah, I'm going to play this week and next week. And I don't think I'm way in the back burner. I feel like my game is pretty good.

Q. And just a random question. We asked Stricker this, too. We're doing this on PGATour.com. Just is there anybody on this Tour that, like, you would take -- like you would love to take a part of their game, like Steve Stricker's putting, or --

FRED COUPLES: Yeah.

Q. Who would you want to borrow?

FRED COUPLES: To start? Yeah, okay.

Off the tee, I would like to drive it like Scott Parel. And then second shots going to par 5's, I would like to hit my woods probably like Steve Stricker. And then irons, I will take myself, I'll take my chances with my irons. And then putting, it's easy to say Stricker, but I'm going to go out on a limb and I'm going to say Bernhard Langer. I don't want to putt like that, but I would like to see my ball go in the hole as often as his does.

Q. Considering what a big sports fan you are, are you upset about the college football, Big 10, and all that, or do you think it's the right call?

FRED COUPLES: Well, I mean, there's people that -- it's just like our commissioner. This is his job, he does it for a living. And it was a little weird the first week, when there are -- I don't know how many guys got COVID, I'm going to guess and say five, and maybe a couple of them went home. I didn't think that was very good. But the job the Tour has done since is incredible. You look at basketball, I think they're doing well. So for me, college football, you're around so many people.

I mean, I know a referee in the NBA, and he said the bubble is like -- if you go out of the bubble, the veterans will jump all over you. And I think that's kind of a cool thing. I'm sure on the regular tour, you know, if they caught a couple 22-year-olds out and infecting other people, I'm sure some of the veterans would go to those guys and have a word to say, because it's a pretty serious time.

So it's just one of those things where, yes, it's disappointing. I mean, I can watch college football, or I can watch the corn-hole championships on ESPN. I mean, it's just something where someone is going to win and lose and it's entertaining.

But I don't want -- I mean, how long is this thing going to be around? And if we don't -- I don't know. I don't know enough about it. I shouldn't even comment on any of it. I

would like to see college football, yes.

Q. Fingers crossed for the NFL.

FRED COUPLES: Why not? Yeah. My fingers, though -- I'm a golfer. My fingers are crossed for us to play golf. And if we don't get fans, which that's the way it looks, that's the only downfall, because, I mean, I watched Sunday at the PGA. I was shocked what was going on. There were so many people that could win, and then out of the blue they give everyone a drivable par 4 and this guy drives it up there 8 feet and makes it. And that's pretty much the reason -- well, he played 71 other great holes, but that's the reason he went from 10 to 12 to 13. And I thought it was incredible.

And so for us to watch -- whether I'm a golfer or not, I think we're putting on a little show. We're not getting COVID.

And I can tell you that I got here and I -- I have never done so many things at a golf tournament and we're only Wednesday morning. I have been tested. I picked up my test. I went, had my temperature taken. I went back and got a ticket to get in the gates. And then I'm eating out of plastic that's been wrapped up seven times, just to stay clean. And I got no problem with it.

Q. Fred, ask you one more quick one. Was it cool seeing Jim Furyk win on Sunday, new blood out here?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. No, it's always -- I mean, those guys are destined for winning. If you look, he -- I played with him two years ago at L.A., and he hit it so good. It's like, oh, my God, you're going to be 50 soon, why don't you just stay in the regular Tour? Which he probably will. He will scatter and play a few.

But you only get one chance when you're 50 to keep playing on the regular Tour. But I didn't see much of it, to be honest. I watched it on my phone. I think I was playing. And then he got ahead quickly. And he's a winner. And I have heard how great he plays at Warwick Hills and all that. But it's never easy to win. You can ask a few other guys that haven't won or won much, and it's always surprising because it's difficult out here. But he went out and won his first one, and the next time he plays, he will be the guy to beat. Just like Stricker was and Ernie Els and the rest of these guys turning 50.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Thank you so much.

FRED COUPLES: Thank you guys.