

RETIEF GOOSEN

THE MODERATOR: All right. Retief, you're defending championship here this week at Firestone for the Bridgestone SENIOR PLAYERS Championship. How does it feel to be back and defending your title?

RETIEF GOOSEN: It's always great coming back to a place that you are a defending champion. Firestone was good for me last year. Hopefully this week can be the same. The course is in wonderful condition, probably the best I have seen it. And hopefully the golf game comes with it.

THE MODERATOR: Well, it seemed like your golf game was on point last week, you got second at the Ally Challenge, so you're feeling good about your game as you return from a long break?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, I think so. Ally was a little bit wild the first couple of days, and in the final round things started falling together. And if I can continue that momentum into this week it's going to be good. As I said, the golf course is great, and it's going to play really tough this week. I think probably even tougher than it did last year. I think the greens are that much quicker. And the fairways seems that much firmer.

THE MODERATOR: What is it about this golf course that was key to your win last year?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I played here many times over the years, so I think a little bit of experience of that helps, knowing certain breaks on the golf course, on the greens, so that helps. It's one of those courses that driving is key. If your driving is a little off this week, you're going to sort of struggle to hit the greens here.

Q. I know it's not your first time out, but what did you do during the lockdown, and where were you?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I was stuck in Orlando, so it wasn't too bad a place to be stuck. Lucky where I live we didn't close the clubhouse, they didn't close the golf course. The fitness areas and so on was closed, but -- so at least you were able to get out on the golf course if you wanted to. But for three months I didn't touch a club and just did things at home. And then the last couple of months I sort of started playing and getting back into the swing of things.

Q. Did you almost feel rejuvenated by that break?

RETIEF GOOSEN: In a way, I was sort of off key to take the rest of the year off. It started becoming quite a nice habit just having to wake up and not having to worry about picking up a golf club. But I suppose after about three, four months you sort of start feeling, oh, maybe the bug is biting, let's go out.

Q. Did you develop any other -- like somebody's taken up cooking. Or anything weird while you were -- during those -- during that time?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I actually am a bit of a mechanic, actually, should I say. So I bought myself an old car and spent three months renovating it. So I was under the bonnet for three months and taking things apart and cleaning and putting them back together. That's just the kind of thing I like.

Q. What kind of car?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I bought an old 2006 Hummer H2 Sut and it needed a bit of work done. That's what I wanted. And it just worked out fine now. It's a great car to drive.

Q. Sounds like the car LeBron had when he was in high school.

Weren't you doing some wake boarding too?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, I got onto the water. I wake boarded for the first time. My son got into it quite a bit. And I thought myself, okay, I will try water skiing again. I used to do slalom water skiing, but after back surgery, which is -- well before back surgery I sort of gave it up, so it will be 10 years. But I got out behind the boat. And it was a little sort of wobbly in the beginning, but later on, I started finding a little bit of stride. But I didn't want to push myself and fall and twist an ankle, that's for sure.

Q. What do you remember about the closing stretch last year? You had a really good birdie on 17, and then obviously a great drive on 18, great approach on 18, and a birdie to finish. What do you remember about those?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, the birdie on 17 was key. You don't want to come down 18 having to birdie. And 17, yeah, I had a good little 7-iron in there, made a good putt. And 18, the drive is key. On 18 if you can really whack it down the middle of the fairway and give yourself an angle into that hole, which was key. So I -- I felt my driving was good. Let's take the driver and get it down there as far as possible. And I happened to hit it perfect and just left myself a little wedge in.

Q. How many cars have you tinkered with? Is this one of the first?

RETIEF GOOSEN: It's probably sort of second or third one I have sort of tinkered with

over the years. I'm a bit of a car guy. So they come in and out of my garage. I don't drive it too long.

Q. Is the fear here to stay?

RETIEF GOOSEN: At the moment, it's the same. I'm under champion stress, I'm a senior, and the gray is not better. If I was playing with the youngsters, I would probably get rid of it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.