

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
March 5, 2020



FRED COUPLES

Q. Welcome home.

FRED COUPLES: Beautiful, beautiful. I played yesterday in the pro-am. The course is really, really nice, and it's one of my favorite tournaments. So I'm hoping to have a fun day today with our group. Have a great group, a little special addition that's going to watch, Eric and Amanda, and then get started tomorrow.

Q. Fred, can you just tell us a little bit about the special guests you have?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. Well, so for my birthday I went to the Ellen Show and I watched the Ellen Show. I love the Ellen Show. I love Ellen.

She had a guest, Eric, who had come down with ALS. He's right over here. He's 28 years old.

And it just kind of hit me hard, and it was three weeks ago. And with Jeff Purser's help we kind of put this together. Ellen was lucky enough to send Dave McGuire, who is kind of her director and agent, and then Andy, who runs the TVs out for everybody, so they're playing with us.

And then Amanda called and said, "Do you mind if Peter Tomasulo," who I have the same agent when he played and I've known Peter a long, long time. And then obviously his buddy Casey, and I know his father.

So we're going to have a heck of a day, and we're going to try and play in a fundraiser May 11th and raise some money for Eric and Amanda and ALS.

And today's just a start. So I know the Ellen Show is here and Ellen made a couple comments to David about what a special day this is. I love Ellen. I sent David a text, I think she's the most incredible person I've ever been around. We got to stand next to her for seven minutes and talk and it was fun.

So this is not unusual for Tour players to do stuff, but it just kind of hit me hard that I'm sitting there on TV bawling like a baby for a 29-year-old kid. He just reminded me of so many other situations I've been in.

And it's a round of golf, but hopefully it will be more than that and we can raise some money in his name to keep pushing this. Hopefully he's around a long time to raise a lot of money for ALS.

Q. Just getting back to the course, what's your favorite hole on the course?

FRED COUPLES: You know there's a few. I can tell you the ones I don't play well. That would be No. 8. We can go from 7 to 9. There's stretches. And if you look back, I might go on a par-par-bogey-birdie-eagle streak, so there's certain holes where you can attack and I try and attack those.

But my favorite hole I think is probably 17. It's pretty rowdy, it's pretty fun, it's a very challenging green. Everyone asks me, like Ernie said, hey, Newport. I said it's got the best crowds. We get a lot of people to come here and it makes for a great week. This is not because I live near here. If I lived in Seattle where I grew up, I'd still play in this tournament every year. It's a very, very good tournament.

Q. What's it like, you see neighbors and people from around town?

FRED COUPLES: Just when I opened the garage today, my neighbor, who has a few people come over on Thursdays in the morning and they have coffee and stuff, and he said, So what's your next event? I said, Actually -- I'm throwing the clubs in, which I do a lot to go practice -- I said, I'm playing this week in Newport. Is that this week? I'm like, yeah. So anyway, he's a golfer, but he's just got more things on his mind.

I hit balls yesterday, or on Tuesday at Big Canyon and every member's going to come out and try and watch a hole or two. It's fun, it's challenging. I can't ask Jeff for enough tickets. I think it's at 20 right now and I don't even have 20 friends, but they're all at Hunter's school and they're neighbors and they just want to come out for three or four holes and see what it's like. And then the weather is supposedly going to be perfect.

Q. Staying with the community connection, Hoag Hospital is a big beneficiary.

FRED COUPLES: Yes.

Q. Just the local economy and the charitable contribution?

FRED COUPLES: Well, this is a huge event. When we lost -- who did we lose? Toshiba, sorry -- and then Hoag came in. Mark does a great job and I've played with him in the pro-am a lot, and Hoag Hospital, I've yet to visit. I hope I don't need to go there for a long time. But it's the perfect tournament.