

**ROUND 2 INTERVIEW**  
**March 7, 2020**



**FRED COUPLES (-9)**

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**Q. Made some ground up on the leaders?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Yes, I did. I birdied a couple holes right out of the box there and then the par 5 was downwind. It wasn't bad, I played pretty well. I got a little loose with hitting driver every hole and just swinging hard so I didn't hit a lot of fairways. It wasn't like down the middle and having sand wedges, but I was never in trees or behind trees. I just felt like some of the holes -- and then we all drove it way up there on No. 11, had a chip shot, we all made pars. It's just tricky. You're trying every shot, but the harder you try to hit like the perfect shot, the more tense you are with these 50-, 80-yard shots because the greens are rock hard. What looks easy is not.

And then at 12 I drove it up there and I hit a beautiful little 50-yard shot to about an inch. But other than that, a little south parring the last two par 5s. Good drives and not a good 3-iron on the other one. And then 18 I nuked a rescue that went a lot farther than I thought. I was not trying to leave it short, I was trying to get in the back middle of the green and it went over the green with, for most people, probably not the hardest chip in the world, but when the grass gets a little dicey, it scooted a little bit. But if it stays in the back of the green, I'm a good lag putter, but I just flushed it. I had 225 and I think I carried it 235 maybe.

**Q. So in position tomorrow, just need to take advantage of the par 5s, right?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Well, if I had gotten one of them, that would have been a dream round. I didn't, so I'm sure I'll fall another shot behind somewhere, or two. But I can't stop what they're doing, I've just got to play and have a really, really good round. I didn't make a bogey, yesterday I bogeyed the eighth hole, and I'm putting pretty well. So I think tomorrow will be even more difficult. The greens, you get three- and four-footers, it's nasty. I'm not trying to give myself many of those. When I have a 30-footer, I'm trying to get it up as close as I possibly can and so far I'm doing that.

**Q. Like you mentioned, you only had one bogey yesterday.**

**FRED COUPLES:** I'll tell you what I'm doing, I'm challenging the wind a little bit with 8, 9 and wedges. I'm not kind of telling myself, well, you're 130 yards, it's into the wind, let's knock this in there five feet. It's almost impossible to hit shots and judge this wind. So a lot of pars and I'm okay with that.

**Q. Living in Newport now, do you kind of feel that extra kind of support?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Oh, for sure, yeah. There's a lot of people out there and a lot of yelling

and a lot of fun. There you go. It's fun. It's a great tournament, it's one of my favorites. I tell everyone like Ernie, when you get on tour, you don't want to miss Newport because they have great crowds and it's a fun golf course.

When you get a guy like Ernie, he doesn't want to play in front of 30 people, it's kind of not conducive for a guy who's just coming off the PGA TOUR and 5,000 people watch him every round. So when he plays here, he plays like he is, he's going to get the galleries and enjoy it. In my opinion, that's what we need for people to come out and play our tour. It's fun. I mean, I'm 10 years into it so I can easily say things that I wouldn't have when I was 50, but I can promise you if you're a really good player and you turn 50 and you go play and you get a really good group and there are 50 people watching you, it's a little challenging to enjoy it, I'll be honest.

**Q. He's up there now.**

**FRED COUPLES:** He's going to have galleries every week the way he plays.

**Q. Would you like to play with him tomorrow?**

**FRED COUPLES:** I would like to be close to him. I think he was -- someone was talking about a good -- that might be him on 18, but I think I'll be behind. I just need to -- someone's going to have a 5 or 6 under.

**Q. Tomorrow, you mean?**

**FRED COUPLES:** Yeah. So if that's the guy at 9 under, then I've got to have 6 under, so I've got to have a hot round as they say.