

Travelers Championship

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Jim Furyk

Press Conference



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CHAMPIONSHIP



JOHN BUSH: We'd like to welcome Jim Furyk into the interview room here at the Travelers Championship. Congratulations on your 58 today, the lowest round in PGA TOUR history. If we could just get some comments on your day.

JIM FURYK: I mean, just -- I'm still a little stunned and a little flabbergasted. Usually not short on words, so that probably won't happen. You know, wouldn't have been a round that I would have expected coming if you look at -- I played pretty well in Canada but really struggled through the week at the PGA. I think I finished around 70th for the week. I was in that position starting this morning.

I've really been struggling a little bit with my golf swing. Playing okay but not hitting the ball the way I expect and wanted to, and for the last couple of weeks, I think playing Baltusrol, being a long golf course, being a really wet golf course, I think put a little pressure on my game and got my swing a little long, trying to hit the ball probably a little farther and not knowing it or not doing it consciously. When my swing gets long, my upper body and lower body get out of sync and it makes it hard to hit the ball solid, makes it hard to hit the ball straight. It took me a bunch of rounds of golf to kind of figure it out and to get back in the swing of things, and started to work on it on Friday, played a good round, but kind of lost that feel yesterday and was able to go to the range last night and kind of send some video to my dad, texted back and forth with him, and kept working on some things in my setup that we were working on, and kind of today felt like I wanted to go out there and shorten and tighten up my swing a little bit.

It's kind of a reminder no matter how bad you feel with your swing you're never that far away, or no matter how good you feel you're probably not that far away from playing poorly, as well. I went out yesterday and really didn't have command of the golf ball, and turned around and played pretty much a flawless round of golf today.

JOHN BUSH: You were the last man to shoot 59 on TOUR. Can you compare the emotions and the rounds?

JIM FURYK: Real similar. I think I was better prepared this time for it because I had gone through it once

before. Both rounds -- in both rounds I went out in the first side and shot 8-under par, got off to good starts. This time birdieing 10, 11, 12, I think there I birdied 2, 3 and 4, and so I've got it under par. I've got it to 11-under par through 12 today.

And then in both situations I kind of hit a little lull in the middle of that second side, and I did that today, although it was a positive one. I drove it and hit it well for 13, 14, 15. The reason I did not go for 13 in two is I drove it in a divot, and it was a 3-wood, so I couldn't go at it. Laid up, hit the wedge a little too hard, hit a good putt at 14 that didn't go, misread it a little bit, and then I hit a pretty darned good putt at 15, as well. I look back, I was trying to -- I've seen that tape now probably a dozen times, and I misread it a little bit. I thought it was kind of a left center putt. Fluff thought it might break a little bit more, and he was right. I hit it left center and it spun out on me.

But the putt at 16 was huge, to see that go in and get it to 12-under par, and then it was, again, fighting emotions. A lot can go wrong at 17, so getting the ball in the fairway there was key. I hit one in the water early in the week. I didn't make a good swing off 17 tee. It was a little bit of a guided swing rather than letting it go, but I hit a good second shot, just gassed up a little bit and hit it too hard. It was nice to grind out the little three-footer for par.

And then at 18, I wanted to keep a little short right of the pin, and I think that shot from 17 was in my mind. I didn't want to go ahead and gas it again by the hole, and just came up a little bit short. But hit a good first putt, and it's nice when the second ones are mindless and they're up there about a foot.

Q. What does it say about, first of all, golf, and secondly, you personally, that you can struggle with your swing as late as the night before and come out and shoot 58 on Sunday?

JIM FURYK: You know, it is that type of game. I've really had a good ball-striking year. Coming off the injury, I really haven't spent -- one, I didn't have the ability to practice a lot when I first came back in May and June, but I was so happy with the way I was hitting the ball for most of the events I played, I didn't have a need to go and really work hard on the range. It's been a lot for me, the short game, the scoring, just kind of

putting it all together on the golf course.

The last, say, seven competitive rounds, I hit the ball pretty well in Canada, drove the ball great. The last seven competitive rounds where I've struggled a little bit with my swing has been something new and kind of frustrating. But yeah, I think yesterday -- you know, I didn't feel that far off on Thursday. Friday I had a pretty good day. Yesterday I felt like someone else leaped into my body and was making the swing. I wasn't hitting the ball solid. I think I hit 12 drivers yesterday, hit the ball in the fairway five times. That's just not -- that's not my -- that's my strength, so to turn that around and make it a weakness is the reason I shot a couple over par yesterday.

But yeah, in this game you catch a little tip here, a little tip there, and you make a few good swings, and that momentum can switch pretty quickly. It doesn't ever feel like it, but when it happens, it's a lot of fun.

Q. At what point in the round today did you think you had something special going, did you know it was really, really something special?

JIM FURYK: Well, I think I started to get excited through like -- started to maybe raise an eyebrow holes 4, 5 and 6. I hit the ball really solid, really well. I wasn't thinking about shooting in the 50s or anything like that, but then kind of 7, 8, 9. 7, I almost holed a 9-iron. I had a foot putt, maybe foot and a half. Didn't have to read it. It was close enough. 8, hit a 4-iron less than 15 feet, knocked that in and then almost holed a wedge at 9, where again it was a tap-in.

You know, 7, 8, 9 I knew we had something special, and to go out and shoot 27 on the front knowing that I've got a par 35 on the back, it's exciting. You know that you've got a good opportunity.

But yeah, in my mind there was holes that I felt like I had to get through on the back nine. 10 is one of those with that long, skinny green, pin in the back today. I made birdie there. I wanted to get through the drive at 13, I wanted to get through the 17th hole, you know, and was able to do all that pretty well. Really once I got through -- the mental battle really started after 12. Now I've got it 11-under par. I've got it in the 50s, and kind of the sky's the limit. So fighting really trying to stay out of the way, stay aggressive, not get conservative, not -- and really not strategy-wise, but it's easy in that situation to make a very conservative swing. I want to take a smart route or try -- not always trying to hit it this far. There's pins where you're going to play 15 feet left or right of the pin, but then you have to make an aggressive swing to get there, and I was able to do that for most of the day.

Q. You sort of just touched on this. Were you

thinking 57, 58, 59, anything like that specifically? And then secondly, can you maybe just describe thoughts and emotions when you obviously tapped in on the last?

JIM FURYK: I guess had I never shot 59 before, I probably would have been thinking 59, the barrier. But the fact that I did it three years ago, you know, in the back of my mind I've got 11-under through 12, I've got six holes to play. If I play them under par, I'm going to break another barrier.

Yeah, having that experience in the past, and this one mimicked it a lot, it was comforting for me. You don't wake up on Sunday morning with an 8:41 tee time thinking that anything exciting is going to happen. I mean, really on those days the most exciting thing that can happen is the group in front of you plays quick and your flight takes off a little early and you get home is usually what you're looking to do. To get out there and make a bunch of birdies and get the juices flowing and feel like I was in the hunt in a golf tournament was kind of cool.

Q. As you were walking off the 18th green, I saw you kind of turn around and just take it in a little bit there. What was going through your mind there?

JIM FURYK: Just cool. I mean, just -- again, not a golf course I've played a lot. The last two times I was here was 2011 and 2001. You know, kind of wanting to take it all in and get a good look, and you know, enjoy it. I kind of chuckled because I played the front nine pretty much relatively benign. There wasn't a lot of people out there, not a lot of cameras, not a lot of media, and I joked with someone walking over to 10 or walking to 11, hey, what's all the big fuss about, kind of giving a hard time after birdieing 10 I think it was, and then you kind of see the crowd grow and the people get excited, and it was -- just kind of enjoy it and take it in.

Q. I know you said you hadn't played much in a while, but is there anything about this course that kind of fits in with all the courses that you've played that makes it stand out? And also, are there any particular shots that you can't wait to take here or can't wait not to take here?

JIM FURYK: I'll be honest, the two courses that I've played well on have a lot of awkward looks to me. I know that's going to sound really strange. This golf course is liked by -- it's a very liked golf course on the PGA TOUR, and a lot of players love coming here to play, and I think one of the reasons why is they say that it really doesn't favor a different style. You've got a guy like Bubba who bombs it, and he loves the golf course, and then you've got guys who are much shorter hitters and say, well, it's not a long golf course. If I get it in the fairway I've got short irons, and I feel like it favors my style, as well. I think the fact that it doesn't weed out a

bunch of players is the reason folks like it.

It has a very TPC look to it. It has some hard edges and some very sharp lines. It has areas where the ball funnels off the green, and it gets swept away in the rough, and different things to me leave me apprehensive. I'm apprehensive on a lot of TPC designs, and it's funny, I thought the same of Conway the first time I played it, and my two lowest rounds ever on the PGA TOUR are places that I'm not ultimately the most comfortable, if that makes sense.

I don't think it's a bad golf course for me by any means. I think it really actually plays into my style of game. It just has some looks off some tees that just leave me a little -- and as this week went on, I think I got a lot more comfortable with it because the more you play it, the better you'll feel.

But it's interesting, I kind of have usually played a lot of my best rounds of golf when I'm not firing -- I'm close but I'm not quite there. I think it makes me concentrate a lot more, and I think being at a place where I know it suits my game but I'm not totally comfortable makes me zero in and focus a little more, too, and that might be part of why I played so well at Conway and played a good round here.

Q. What does this mean to you in terms of the history of your career, having already had a 59, now the only player ever with a 58, with your 17 tournament titles, where does this rank for you, and what do you think when you put this into the highlights of your career?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I don't think I could say, well, it's better than this or not quite as good as that. We always -- we're always going to be judged by major championship wins and tournament wins, and I still feel that's the most important thing out here is you live to compete and try to win golf tournaments. I'm really proud about being on Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup teams, especially those teams that have done well and succeeded and played well, but this 59 and the 58 are -- no one else -- it's going to be a while, but no one else can say they've done that out here on the PGA TOUR. It's really special, and it's probably going to take a little while for it to sink in and really kind of put it into perspective for me on where everything fits in.

Q. As you were coming down the back nine, what was the conversation like between you and Fluff, and how many times did you check that scorecard before you signed it?

JIM FURYK: I have the scorecard yips anyway. The guys in the trailer tell you I'm terrible with the scorecard. I go over it three or four times, and then I usually peek my head out and ask them again if it's

signed and they've already checked it three times, so I did the same thing.

In both instances when I shot 58 and 59, I didn't talk a lot. I talked to Miguel a little bit coming up 18, he and his caddie Martin. But I didn't talk a lot in either round, and I think a lot of it for me was just trying to stay on point and try to -- fighting that mental battle, keep going over things in my head that were positive and what I needed to be thinking about, and when anything got in there that wasn't positive, to kind of laugh it off and kind of refocus.

I think as I've played well and I've gotten in the stretch, by nature I'm not a chatty person. Like a Lee Trevino or Peter Jacobsen, if you made them be quiet, it would probably be disconcerting to them. Well, it's the same way with me; I'm a little bit shy by nature, so to make me be outgoing, I'm not comfortable in that situation, so to be quiet and kind of have my own thoughts and processes is what's comforting for me.

Q. Go over the eagle hole-out at 3, and how many competitive course records do you own and how many overall do you have?

JIM FURYK: I don't know how many I've got. That's a good question. And they always get broken, as well. I've set probably, I don't know, somewhere between -- maybe not 10 but probably more than five. But they get broken along the way, as well, so I'm not sure.

What was the first part of that? The eagle?

Driver down the middle. I think I had about 136 to the pin, and I hit a wedge, and it one or two hopped into the hole. It was in the shade. You couldn't really quite see it, but I could hear it kind of smack the pin in the hole, like it hopped in, kind of flew in.

Q. Was anybody around?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, there was probably about 10 people up there, five to 10 people. They kind of hooted and hollered. Fluff didn't realize it went in because we couldn't see it, but the way I heard it and then their reaction, I said, "I think I just made that."

Funny, I holed an iron shot the day I shot 59, as well. That's another similarity.

Q. What exactly did your dad tell you last night after you sent him the video?

JIM FURYK: He said my swing -- I asked him -- it looked short to me. I took a video. I don't watch my swing a lot. Actually when I say that, I never watch my swing or pay attention, but I had Fluff video two 9-irons, and I looked at them and was kind of a little shocked at how short it looked. The club was probably more in

that position. I sent it off to my dad and said, does this look too short, and he looked at it and said, not at all. In fact, he said a couple nice things to me, you look like you're really in good balance. It looks like everything is working together a lot better than what you were explaining before. I think -- he said, I think it looks great.

And then just for the hell of it basically, I pulled out a driver and hit one more, and I made a decent swing with it and sent it to him, and because the driver is a little longer it was a touch longer swing, and again, he just sent back, looks great, I'm anxious to see how it works tomorrow.

Q. (No microphone.)

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I do everything off of feel, and then when I started kind of shortening up my backswing when I worked on our setup keys then I got a little shorter, a little tighter on my backswing. All of a sudden, I mean, I hit the ball solid and it was down the line, and I hadn't been able to do that that day, yesterday. It felt good, so I just -- in my mind I kind of wanted to see it, and when I looked at it, I was a little surprised that it was as short as it was, and I sent it over to dad, and he said, no, it looks great. That's probably how it usually is, I just don't watch video.

Q. What were you playing for today, and did your playoff survival, just you're on the bubble probably, was that any part of your thinking at all?

JIM FURYK: I think I went to the range yesterday rather than just kind of mailing it in, I went to the range really to -- I just didn't want to go shoot another 72 and hit it like I did yesterday. It would have been easy to do, but wanted to practice and kind of get some momentum. I wanted to go out and play a solid round of golf today. Even though I have a week off, carry that into the week off and then try to carry that into Greensboro.

But yeah, I started the day ranked I think 118th in points, so if I finish 70th or whatever I was, I think my projection was 121 or 122, I'm going to fall -- I was not going to play next week because this is four in a row so I would have fell back to kind of on the bubble and would have been kind of playing to get to Bethpage really at Greensboro.

I think, you know, in the back of my mind today, one of the things I was thinking about was where that put me up on the leaderboard and a good finish, and not sure -- honestly I'm not a guy that ever follows points so I have no damn idea how that'll do. I've never played for points. But I don't know how that's going to jump me up. Hopefully it'll put me in a little better situation where I can breathe a little easier at Greensboro and kind of feel like I've got nothing to lose and everything to gain, go to Greensboro and try to hop up farther. It

would be a better feeling than sitting on a bubble and talking about it.

I think part of it was once I really got it going, I knew that it could make a difference in the season. It would be disappointing to play Greensboro and have the season end, if that made sense, and not get in any playoff events and then wait for the fall to come around. To kind of keep playing and -- like I said, I'm a little worn out. I've played now 11 out of 14 weeks, which I didn't realize it was that much. But I've played 11 of 14, so I'm -- mentally, I think, more than anything else, a little fried.

JOHN BUSH: Jim Furyk, once again, congratulations.

JIM FURYK: Thank you.