

Travelers Championship

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Jim Furyk

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome someone who certainly doesn't need much introduction around here, Jim Furyk.

Jim, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. One year removed from your 58 here last year in your fifth start back then. Obvious question is just a few thoughts on being back to a place that's obviously quite significant and near and dear to you?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I think it's good feelings. I've had a lot of fans talk about the score, mention 58. You know, joking around about someone shooting 57 this week. It is a good feeling to come back to a place you played well or in the past going to a golf course that I'd won at. It always gives you a good memory, a good feel. This is a place I really haven't had a lot of success on in my career, other than that one crazy, low round. But it's significant. Something to draw from. It's nice to be back and kind of relive a few of those moments.

Q. Coming off top 25 last week at Erin Hills, I know that's not the best way to gauge the status of your game, but how are you feeling coming into the week as far as the state of your game goes?

JIM FURYK: Better. It's been a rough summer since starting at the Masters, I missed a bunch of cuts by a shot. You know, I really was kind of reeling getting into the U.S. Open as far as the way I felt about my game. I was a little confused. I had been working really hard but hadn't seen a lot of results.

It was nice to play a really good, solid tournament last week. I think I put together three really good rounds and Friday's round was a couple over par where I could have scored a lot better. But I didn't hit the ball poorly. I think I hit a ton of fairways, ton of greens that day. Just didn't really score, get the ball in the hole.

But that course can jump up and bite you on a few holes, and it did. I made a double bogey and a couple of careless bogies there that cost me. I saw some great signs of kind of some flashes of my old self, and saw some good signs where, hopefully, the hard work was put into motion this week.

Q. I spoke to you a couple months ago and you had -- I had asked you about Ryder Cup captain and player. You said right now you're in the player mode. Can you just talk about those two aspects

of your state right now?

JIM FURYK: I think the question was -- I think what a lot of folks have asked me is can you juggle -- I've been asked by my dad, I've been asked by a lot of folks that are close to me, can you juggle being Ryder Cup captain and play and feel like it's not bothering your game? And I think so far I really don't feel like I've had a poor season, but I wouldn't blame that on the fact that I was named Ryder Cup captain. I really don't think it's added to a ton of my time.

It's always on the back of my mind. I'm always thinking about ways to prepare and get ready. You know, things that I want to carry forward. Things that I may want to tweak in the future. It's always in the back of my mind. Looking forward to here in a few weeks, I'll be in Paris, and I'll have a site visit and see the hotel we're at. Hopefully get an idea of what rooms we may have for the team there, what the golf course looks like, what they may do in the clubhouse there for us. So I'll walk around.

But as far as affecting my play, you know, I guess maybe that's a question I never asked Davis or Zinger or Lehman or guys that we're trying to play a long side being Ryder Cup captain. That's probably one of the questions I haven't asked.

Next year it's going to take a lot of my time. I'm interested to see how much and how that will affect my practice schedule and how I get ready for tournaments. This year it really hasn't been -- there is no way I could blame anything on the time it's taken away. I have had some duties, and we'll have more, surely, coming up this summer and this fall. But so far it's been good. It's been fun. It's kept me kind of wanting to play more and wanting to be out here a little bit more, rubbing elbows with all the guys that may be playing on my time.

Q. Jordan Spieth was saying one of the reasons he decided to come to this tournament a week after a major was on the recommendation of players that have played here. What is the recommendation of this tournament? What do you tell people or other golfers when they asked you about coming to Travelers, especially when it's a vacation week for a lot of people?

JIM FURYK: I think a lot of guys are worn out. They put a lot of effort and practice into getting ready for a

major. If you do happen to play well, it's emotionally taxing. So you kind of almost have that post-tournament hangover type, where you want to relax and rest and get away.

The reputation of the event is pretty good. It's got a very strong field this year, maybe the best ever. But it's a golf course, I think, that I could see why someone would tell Jordan -- Jordan's definitely long enough. He's not short. He's not even average. He's got more length than most out here, but he's not a bomber. He's not a guy that hits it as far as Rory or Jason or Dustin or Brooks or guys that are ranked in the top four or five in the world. He probably has the least amount of power. But he's still pretty long in spots.

This golf course, you go back to 2010, he had Bubba Watson and Corey Pavin in a playoff. I mean, that's pretty cool. Corey was probably one of the shortest guys on TOUR at the time, and Bubba one of the longest, yet this golf course played so it's not really a factor. I think it gives everyone a chance to win.

We still have plenty of golf courses like this on the PGA TOUR. But surely we have a bunch of golf courses that suit a bomber's aspect. I'm sure when folks told Jordan he would like this golf course, they really went to the things that are important here, getting the ball in play, being a good iron player. Surely if you're going to make a bunch of birdies out here, putting is the key, and Jordan may be one of the best putters in the game. So I can see where this golf course may be right up his ally.

But he's a good enough player that pretty much any golf course is right up his ally, if that makes sense. If you're one of the Top 5 players in the world, you can play anywhere. But I'm sure his friends are telling us it's a golf course you would like.

Q. I'm just wondering, Tiger tweeted out that he was seeking professional help for some of the things going on in his life. What are your thoughts on what's going on with him?

JIM FURYK: I haven't spoken to Tiger since, so it's hard to really know exactly what's going on. Surely, unfortunately, I saw that video like everyone else. I got the news. I think everyone rushes to a judgment of what they think may have happened.

But, first and foremost, I want Tiger to be happy. I want him to be healthy. Golf is, as we get older in this game, golf is so far down the list on what's totally important in life. You want your health first. You want to be a happy person. He's got two beautiful kids. I wish him the best. I want him to be happy and healthy first. If he has an opportunity in the future to come back and play the game and play it competitively, great. If not, he

accomplished pretty much more than anyone in the history of the game did anyway.

So, first and foremost, I think a lot of us that know Tiger, that have played alongside him a bunch, surely he was a huge help at the Ryder Cup last year. Those folks have some bonds with him. I think everyone's pulling for him and rooting for him and hoping that he gets healthy. That could be bad, that could be the physical injuries, but also if he does have an issue with the pain medication, again, I don't know. Hopefully he gets that settled as well.

Q. Do you have a theory on why 20-somethings are winning so many tournaments?

JIM FURYK: Because they're good. I mean, I think there's just is -- you can see it coming a few years ago of how many good, young 21, 22, 23-year-old players we have. I think the kids are coming to the TOUR at a younger age. They're more prepared. They're ready to win at an earlier age than we were two decades ago, three decades ago.

I mean, when I came out in the early '90s, it was rare that more than one guy out of college would get a card. No one could -- Phil Mickelson didn't quit school early to turn pro. He won a PGA TOUR event when he was a junior in college and stayed for his senior year. So those things didn't happen, but these kids are coming out younger, at an earlier age and getting more prepared.

I look back, golf was -- not saying golf's the coolest sport in the world right now, but I used to hide the fact that I played golf from my friends. It was not accepted. I used to hide my golf clubs in my coach's office, make my mom drive me to school early. Make sure the halls were empty before I ever did carry that bag through it. I knew I'd be fighting my way out one way or another without anyone else seeing it.

I'm not saying golf's a cool sport now, but it's more accepted. You're seeing more good athletes play the game. Therefore, I think, it could be an affect from Tiger as well making the sport more cool.

Q. Going back here to the 58 or maybe the 59 you shot in Chicago, is there a moment or something that Fluff said where you think Fluff really helped you out that day?

JIM FURYK: I think one of the biggest compliments, and there are two or three things I can think about Fluff and why I think he's such a good caddie, but one of the biggest compliments I could say is his demeanor rarely changes no matter what we're doing.

Whether I'm shooting 80, his body language doesn't

show it. If I'm shooting 60, his body language doesn't show it. He's pretty much an even keel, his cadence, his voice, everything kind of stays the same. He doesn't do too much very quickly either, I'll tell you that.

But when I get amped up and I get excited, I get in contention and I have a chance to shoot 58, I've got the same guy on the bag, and it's a very calming effect.

Q. The round of 58, knowing that you've now shot two sub-60 rounds, over the last year you've commented and joked about people saying someone's going to shoot 57. But what's that been like on and off the course? Does it give you a little added confidence when you're out there? What do people say to you over the last year?

JIM FURYK: I don't know if it's given me as much confidence as say winning a golf tournament. Putting together four great rounds and winning the tournament is a good feeling. This was kind of like one day for four hours, I mean, everything went right. I hit a lot of good shots.

I guess there are a few things that didn't go right, but everything just the chips fell in the right position. Everything went in for the most part. It was a really cool round.

I'm actually still a little surprised at how much exposure, how excited people are about it. You know, it was one round of golf. If you really look at it and break it down, it was one great day of golf, but I realize it's the best score -- maybe not the par, but the best score I've ever shot. It is a really cool feather in my hat. It is a confidence builder.

I've always been known as the guy that kind of played well on tough courses. But you look at three of my first four wins came in Vegas at 25-, 28-, and 29-under, I really don't have a problem going low either. But a lot of my wins since then have been on tougher, harder golf courses, U.S. Open-style where even par is a good score, usually. But then you throw in there a couple rounds where I shot 12-under and broke 60.

They were both a lot of fun. They both mimicked trying to win a golf tournament as far as nerves and what I was going through mentally on the golf course, and I think the reason they happened so much later in my career is probably because mentally I was better prepared to handle that pressure and to kind of fight that barrier and get through it.

Q. (Inaudible)?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, but it's a hole that almost makes -- you'll see, very few guys lay up on that hole. The reason why, they put the pins usually in those four

corners, it's a tough wedge shot. You go front left or front right, and you hit it inside 90 yards, you hit it inside 10 feet, you've got a hell of a shot. Almost, I think what's so great about the hole is that it basically almost forces you to go for it, if that makes sense. There's really no other really good option.

And if you put the ball in a position around the greens where you can't get it close, sometimes it's hard to, you know, fight your way up and chip it over there 20 feet from the hole and try to make a 20-footer. Everyone wants to try to get it close, and I think that's when you see some silly things happen, like a guy making a 5 or a 6, it's usually forcing the issue.

Obviously, the lake can get in the way left off the tee. But I think we're building too many drivable par-4s these days that really don't give you the option. Like they're trying to suck you in to go, but the smarter play is to lay-up. In this case, I think on this hole, the smarter play is to go for it, than it is to lay up. I think that's what makes it such a cool hole.