

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: NICK FALDO
August 31, 2017



DAVE SENKO: We'd like to welcome Sir Nick Faldo. Nick, maybe just get us started. You had a chance to look at the golf course, maybe just your thoughts on Canyon Meadows.

NICK FALDO: Yeah, the course is nice. As you know, relatively flat and pretty similar -- greens are running quite quick obviously with the weather, so that's -- there's plenty of downhill putts, so got to pay real attention to that. But yeah, it looks -- I'm looking forward to playing it.

DAVE SENKO: What brought you up here? I know you've played three events this year. What was the decision to come here to Calgary?

NICK FALDO: Well, the decision was a year ago, I was down in the Wilderness Club after my season had finished and I was practicing and messing around, just having some time off chilling. My son was around, so we -- and I thought well, okay, if I want to be a golfer next year, I should do something, because I turned 60 in July and I thought why not celebrate that. So I thought yeah, if I'm going to be a golfer, rather than trying to do one week in between my TV schedule just doesn't work, wait until we finished. I think I'm going to play three out of the next four.

Unfortunately, I played back at Royal Porthcawl, which was four weeks ago, and then I've been sitting in the TV tower for four weeks so I haven't done an awful lot. Then to come out to push yourself to make it all work is hard work. So hopefully, hopefully somewhere over the next -- you know, the next three tournaments it kind of clicks and it gets easier because it's quite difficult when your body just doesn't -- you know, I hit balls a little bit at home, not a great deal. I haven't got -- the thing you lose as you get older is that golfing stamina, being able to stand out there and belt golf balls all day long and play until the sun goes down. Now you have to rush and everything, otherwise it beats you up.

DAVE SENKO: Questions?

Q. I saw you guys were pretty good in the pro-am there today, minus 15. What's the state of your game?

NICK FALDO: Yeah, I feel -- I think with the conditions being nice -- as I said, Porthcawl was brutal, so this is hopefully nice. The weather's not going to be too difficult so at least you get a chance to go out and play. It's down to how decent I can play and keep it going and make some putts. I didn't putt very good today, so need to try and give that a little bit of a boost and be ready for tomorrow, yeah.

Q. Nick, I'm interested just in terms of going from playing to going to the broadcast booth. Johnny Miller takes a beating from the players for various comments that he

makes about them, about their game. How have you found going to the dark side or the other side, did you hear from players about things you've said about them or about their game?

NICK FALDO: No, I think it's helpful because you can get very blase, can't you. If somebody hits a shot and it's outside a certain distance, you don't appreciate really what was going on. So at least when you step out and go and play some golf and realize, wow, to keep hitting it consistently -- that's why I was so good moons ago. You hear me talk about this 15-foot circle, that's the best stat in my mind is when you come in and keep your own stats and go yeah, whatever club I'm hitting, I'm 15 feet. My bad ones are 20, 25, there's a couple at 40, maybe not. But if you keep doing that and I think that is, when I come out and play and I go, oh, boy, I've got one inside 15 feet in the whole round, I used to get a dozen. So yeah, things like that.

Yeah, you appreciate what they can do and different lies as well. The guys go into the rough and hit unbelievable shots, to be honest, because you walk in the rough and the thing goes off in a corkscrew, you know. Yeah, I think the top level, what they're all doing, so it's good. As I said, you're right, it's good for me to -- I hope I express that. I like to, as I say, fall out of my tower for great shots and bad shots as well so you like to react to it.

Q. Guys don't confront you and say hey, I heard what you said about my shot or my game the other day?

NICK FALDO: No. I try to keep it to -- because I don't comment on them, I really comment on the shot. Sure, if somebody's hit a great shot, I hope I tell the viewers why he hit a great shot. If somebody half shanks into the car park, I'll tell them why he half-shanked it. Sure, some people say, oh, that was charming, you tell everybody about my bad shots. But no, you're commenting on what has just happened. I'm the how, what and why man.

Q. Just asking a question for a colleague. He was doing a story on Freddie Couples and he's been the darling out here for a long time. He enjoys his status like you do with the fan adulation. Why do you think Fred Couples, for example, is so adored by the fans?

NICK FALDO: You should ask the fans. Because he's cute and cuddly, is that what it is, something like that?

He gives off that good air that he's having -- Freddie's actually dangerous to play with because he's like, he comes at the 10th, what are we doing out here, why are we bothering and all this sort of thing. Then he gets to the 15th hole, oh, I've had enough of this place. Then you come down the last three holes and he's 4 under and you're 1 and he gets you. He's loving it. He's out there playing.

It was interesting last night, that comment I thought was a really great comment. He says he thinks he's swinging better now than he was 20-odd years ago, which is amazing. Made me

think of some of these rock stars, the Stones, they believe they're playing better now up to 50 years as a band.

So I thought, wow, that's pretty cool because my game's not better than it was 20 years ago, mine's stuck in the TV tower. But no, he's enjoyed -- yeah, once you get that good rapport with the fans, you give back, it's an easy circle. You give to the fans, it comes back.

Q. Nick, when you played you were obviously a perfectionist. Like you said, how many shots you got 15 feet and inside, whatever. Is it tough for you now that you don't have maybe those shots?

NICK FALDO: Well, I'm here in a different -- I'm here to play golf, that's all. If I can just -- my goal this week is for me to say to myself I played well this week, that was good, I hit it a lot better. Because I've tried a couple of times this year and the swing was lousy on a couple of them, then I get my swing right and I go to Porthcawl and we get 40-mile an hour left-to-right winds, so that was just a survival. So hopefully this one is like -- but now as I've said, I've sat in the TV tower for four weeks, jump out again.

So I've just got to get real. If I can walk off hopefully Sunday and go, I did all right this week, I drove better, I hit some really good irons, popped a couple of putts in, that's my goal.

Q. Have you ever been to this area before?

NICK FALDO: No, never been to Calgary, no. The other side of Vancouver or what have you.

Q. Canadian Open?

NICK FALDO: You know, I played it moons ago, yes, but never up to Calgary, no.

Q. And a course that a lot of Calgarians go and play a lot is your Wilderness Club, which people here love. Are you pretty proud of that course?

NICK FALDO: Very. I went there a couple years ago because, as you know, it went into tough times and it's been pulled back. So I went out pure out of to be inquisitive and took my son and a friend of mine, a trainer, and went and had a week and loved it.

Went back last year, I spent two weeks last year. Then this year couldn't quite fit it -- if I'm playing, I can't be away from my daughter forever, so probably fit it in somewhere else, maybe next spring or something we try and do something.

Yeah, I loved it there. I thought it was really cool that you can, you know, chill, the food was good, we've ran a couple cool restaurants, we loved the golf, we loved the fishing and just getting out. And I love the scenery, I love the scenery in Montana. Just to wake up and watch the sky go by is pretty darn cool.

Q. (Question about fishing.)

NICK FALDO: We fished on the boat. Unfortunately, it's too warm, that's the problem. The big fish were down the bottom just nipping away. If it cools down, we'd like to hopefully do a couple Sunday night before we run. Hope it cools down. Maybe I need to get a river report. If the big fish are biting again, then it would be worth it, but then if they're not -- mine was pretty. We had fun, we fished, we had a great lunch and it was nice.

Q. When did you go, Tuesday?

NICK FALDO: Went Tuesday morning, yeah.

Q. What have you heard about this tournament? The reputation seems to be larger than life.

NICK FALDO: Yeah, just heard it's good fun, it's a good tournament, it's a good town. Everybody says it's a great town. We spent a little bit of time, we got some making friends, we've got friends taking us to dinner, all sorts of things like that. So yeah, it's a good atmosphere, good, fun spot.

Q. What's harder, being in the broadcast booth or swinging on the course?

NICK FALDO: Swinging.

Q. That's harder, but even in your day?

NICK FALDO: No, when I was a golfer I was iron man, I could stand out there all day belting golf balls. Now I'm going to collapse. I played one round of a pro-am, I've got to gear up and get ready for tomorrow. I've got to go rebuild myself to get ready for tomorrow. Yeah, it's hard work.

It's unbelievable the residual strength, stamina that we had to stand out there all day belting golf balls and playing and jumping on planes and flying halfway around the world and doing it again and again. I think my golfing's got a little worn out with doing 25 years of that, so I've been enjoying myself up in the TV tower, it's been a nice change of direction.

Q. Just in summation of your whole life and what golf's meant to you and what it's given to you, can you talk just briefly about how good the game has been to you in your life?

NICK FALDO: Well, it's your whole life. I chose wisely, you know? I was a sportsman looking for a sport, and then to choose golf. And the great thing about golf is very simple: Everybody else in the world wants to play golf at any level, from absolute royalty down to the good old guy in the streets, but all the celebs, many, many different walks of life. So you

never would have met people like that or ever felt comfortable meeting people like that. I could meet any celebrity in the world and you've got that common thing of we're all mad golfers and we want to go and play golf. So it was a good choice, it sure was.