

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 2, 2019



RETIEF GOOSEN

CHRIS RICHARDS: Good morning, everyone. I would like to welcome Mr. Retief Goosen to the media center here at the Inspirity Invitational. Retief, you've played a handful of events so far this season. How does it feel to be a rookie once again?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, yeah, the year started off a little slow for me. The first couple events I didn't play all that well after I haven't played for a while. Then I broke a finger, so then I was off another seven weeks. So I've only really played the last two events. It's been a bit of a struggle getting back out, to change my grip a little bit to not put too much pressure on the finger. So it's been a little slow process finding my rhythm again. Hopefully this week it will start appearing.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Looked like you were pointing to your ring finger on your right hand.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yeah, yeah. No, I dislocated this joint over here and fractured it on the inside. So really a little bit of a freak accident, but it's just one of those things. Spent more time with the family, which wasn't too bad.

CHRIS RICHARDS: What's the welcome been like for you? I mean, you haven't played a whole lot of events, but you've been able to play with a lot of guys that you played with out on the PGA TOUR. What's that been like?

RETIEF GOOSEN: It's been good fun seeing some of the guys I haven't seen for a while, that I played with even in the early '90s in South Africa that I haven't seen for a while like Tommy Tolles and so on. It's been good. Obviously all the golf courses are fairly new for me, so I need to really get a handle on that quickly. Overall, very exciting so far. I enjoy it out here, especially on the golf carts now and then. It's good fun.

Q. Retief, was there a certain age that you were at when you started thinking like looking at this tour, you know, a couple years ago or did you start recently thinking about it, or when did you start thinking about you couldn't wait to get out here?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Really after my back surgery, which is a little bit more than five years ago now, I decided that I didn't want to travel as much anymore. Playing in Europe, playing over here, playing all the way around the world, it's difficult. The traveling takes it out of you.

So five years ago I decided, you know, we're going to move from London to Orlando and live here permanently and I'm really just going to focus on playing on the PGA TOUR until whenever time runs out. It went okay up to, you know, last year and then I pretty much lost my privileges on the main tour. There's still a few events I can play, but so really last year

was a full commitment that I was going to come out here and play. I wasn't going to fly around everywhere playing every week, I was going to do a proper schedule on the seniors tour and play the odd PGA TOUR event here.

So to answer your question, yeah, it's quite recently I decided that I will play full time here.

Q. What's been the most surprising thing about this tour that you didn't expect that you've seen since you've been out?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, I wouldn't say there's anything surprising. Before I came here everybody said, oh, you'll really enjoy it, it's so relaxing, nobody practices and all that stuff. Then you get there and it's no different to any other tour; the guys are grinding it out, working out in the gym. So it's exactly what I expected. I didn't quite believe the guys. In our dreams all the guys here that are champions, they grind it out and they want to be out there and work at it and get better.

Q. Before the finger injury, how was your game?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I wouldn't say it was all that great. My first event or -- yeah, Boca, the Naples one, I had a chance to get into the playoff if I birdied the last hole with Jimenez and Langer and I bogeyed it, so that was disappointing. So I felt like the game was there pretty early on.

Yeah, then when I dislocated this -- look, it's still askew, I don't know which direction I'm pointing in -- now that that's happened, it's going to take me a little bit to get back to it. Atlanta was -- I was hitting it okay off the tee, but my iron play was terrible.

This year was also a complete equipment change for me from TaylorMade to Callaway, so it's taken me a while to get clubs in the bag. I think I'm on my first set of clubs now that I find quite good and I like them, so I'm going to stick with those for the rest of the year and wait them out.

Q. Is this a familiar course to you? Did you play here when the Houston Open was here?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No, I haven't, no. I always played at the one down the road near the airport. I'll see it this afternoon. My caddie says it's a good course, it's pretty much in front of you, tight driving, and I'm sure you're going to have to shoot lights out to win.

CHRIS RICHARDS: With your injury, have you had to readjust your goals for the season knowing that you got off to a little slower start than you perhaps wanted?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I won't say the injury is -- don't swing a club for six weeks, seven weeks, it was until the doctor said, yeah, you're good to go. But even then coming back, you know, gripping it with your right hand in the fingers, I couldn't really grip it in the fingers so I had to

grip it more with the palm, so a little stronger right hand just to take the pressure off the section of the finger. I still strap it up whenever I play.

So yeah, it's been a little bit of an adjustment on that front. You feel like you're sort of hanging on on every shot. I've hit a lot of shots leaking out to the right because you're sort of a little scared of releasing with the stronger right hand. I think it's slowly getting better, the finger's getting pretty good. Probably another week or so and I won't need to strap it up anymore.

CHRIS RICHARDS: And then next month already you're going to be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame. Have you started writing your speech? Have you started thinking about what that day is going to be like for you?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, yeah. I mean, Corey Pavin has asked me that a few times already, have you done your speech? I said no, I haven't, but it's in the back of your mind. Daily you get emails from the Hall of Fame requesting things, asking things. They've been around my house a few times collecting things for the exhibition.

So yeah, in the back of your mind you're constantly thinking about it and what you're going to say. I'll probably in the next -- after next week I have a week off and that week I'll really sit down and think what I'm going to say.

Q. So many legends on this tour, you're one of them, and I know Tom Watson doesn't play in a lot of these tour events and he hadn't played here at Insperity in 10 years. What's it mean for this tournament to have a guy like Tom Watson in the field? There's a lot of big-name golfers already, but having Tom, competing against him, what is that like?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I mean, Tom to me growing up was one of my heroes, watching him. I learned my short game from his book. So Jack Nicklaus, I learned to swing from Jack Nicklaus' book and Ben Hogan a little, and Tom Watson, the short game.

I've always admired Tom. He's a great guy, a great person, very strong mentally. So it's great to always see him around and have a chat with him. Hopefully I'll get a chance to play with him maybe this week or definitely through the year. I'm sure he's not too far away from deciding that he's going to hang up the clubs maybe, but every time he's out on the golf course he really brings something special to the tournament.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you very much and good luck this week, Retief.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Thank you.