

JIM FURYK

Q. With Jim Furyk here at the Insperity Invitational. Can you start by telling us where your game's at right now and how you feel heading into this week?

JIM FURYK: It's very so-so at best, I guess. I really haven't had a -- I had a good start to the year on the West Coast on the PGA TOUR. Played pretty well at Pebble, played pretty well at L.A., a so-so finish in Tucson on the Champions Tour, and since then I've struggled. I missed three cuts both by one shot at the Honda and RBC, and then played poorly at Valero. I felt like I was close at RBC actually. I ended up T-66 and just missed the cut. Felt like my game was going in the right direction.

Worked pretty hard on my off week, but tough to actually get a real good feel, as you can tell, for what -- it's just a really tough day. Started out nice, but the wind just picked up. Tough day out here on this golf course, so hard to get a really good feel for what your game's doing here. You know, usually like to have some momentum, play well the last month or so coming into an event and that just hasn't been the case. Just trying to grind it out and, you know, find something that gives me some confidence and try to start climbing up that mountain again and build some good rounds again.

Q. Jim, why the Insperity? You could have played over on the main tour.

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I can play all year if I want, but I kind of -- our schedule out here, I pretty much committed that I was going to play mostly on the Champions Tour this year. We've only had, until this event, only three events on the Champions Tour. One of those is opposite my favorite event, which is RBC Heritage, so that's why I played the Heritage. I'll be honest with you, Valspar's one of my top 3 favorite events. So I kind of just had to make a decision, and I felt like since I was going to play the Champions Tour for most of the rest of the year, if not the rest of the year, it was kind of time to flip the page and come to Houston.

Q. How excited are you to play on this tour? You said you knew when you first came up on the Tour and all that --

JIM FURYK: We all just get really excited about getting older and turning 50. It's awesome. That's what I like to joke about.

No, it's good. I enjoy being out here. I enjoy the carts, I enjoy as far as the practice rounds, carts in the pro-ams, only three-round events. It's more much a track meet. It's not a marathon out here, it's a track meet. You've got to get out there and make some birdies and shoot some low scores.

You know, like I said, I get to see some friends that I wasn't seeing for say the last five to 10 years. There's this misconception, and I talked to some of the younger players on Tour, that everyone's out having a beer and a glass of wine, no one's practicing. It's not really quite that way. Guys are shooting 15, 16 under every week. The range is usually packed and full of guys working on their games and working hard, and you're seeing that even though we're 50 and over, there's a lot of guys that are really competitive and playing some great golf.

Q. So you can be competitive and have fun out here at the same time?

JIM FURYK: I think everyone out here realizes we have a little bit of a second lease on life, right? There's an opportunity to compete again, to still earn a living and enjoy yourself. So I think the guys out here realize that we're a bit of entertainers as well and do a great job in the pro-ams and have fun with the crowds.

Q. Jim, talked to Thomas Bjorn, he's making his debut. Is that kind of cool to see like more and more guys like when they turn 50, they just are dying to get out here and like compete, you know?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, we've had a -- we've had a whole bunch of guys turn 50 recently, and we've got a bunch more coming up in the next year or two. So I thought the Champions Tour was already in a great spot, but you start adding some more names, just recently like Retief and Ernie and I'm going to forget a bunch of guys, but just recently Retief and Ernie, you've got Phil, Mike Weir. You've got Paddy Harrington coming up, Thomas Bjorn. It's fun to see. It's the guys I kind of grew up playing against, whether that was college or as a young professional and then throughout my career on the Tour. Lot of fun to see. And I miss guys like Jay Haas and guys I haven't seen in 10 years. Jeff Sluman. So it's fun to kind of be back out and catch up with some old friends.

Q. Did you play out here much on the regular PGA TOUR?

JIM FURYK: I know I did. I can't tell you -- I probably was 50/50 in my career as far as like I probably had eight or nine opportunities and I probably played four or five times would be my guess. But you would have to check the records, I have no idea. I'm 50 now, I don't know. It was a long time ago.

Q. Do you remember much about the course at all?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, I remember quite a bit. I went through Tour School here. This was my first Finals. Didn't get through the first time. I made it my second year. Played college events here. I think Golf Digest probably sponsored an event here while I was in college and I played in that a couple times, I believe. At least once, I think twice. And played the Shell here.

I do have a memory of it. There's a few holes that slipped by my memory. No. 15 is one of

them. For one reason or another I did not remember 15. Most of the back nine I remember. There was a couple holes on the front that came to me after I saw them, but I couldn't call them up before I got on property.

Q. For the most part, do you like the course?

JIM FURYK: I do, I do. Correct me, is it a Pete Dye golf course?

Q. I don't think this one is.

JIM FURYK: It isn't? It looks like a Pete Dye. It's a place that can make you feel very uncomfortable in a lot of areas. That's why I just thought it was a Pete Dye course, because Pete's courses are known for you to feel uncomfortable.

I think it's got some difficult angles, a lot of water in spots. I just think it kind of keeps you on your toes. And I think the more we play it and the more we're out here, the more comfortable you get with where you can and cannot hit the golf ball. In the wind we played in today, it was a very difficult golf course.

Q. A question about the upcoming Regions Tradition. With it being your first major on the PGA TOUR Champions, are you going to approach that week any differently than you have so far or will it be --

JIM FURYK: I'll miss my cart, that's for sure. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, I'll miss my cart. But I'm still walking obviously for the tournament rounds Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Q. And Thursday.

JIM FURYK: And Thursday there. I guess I'm not. I want to see every golf course a couple times before I get in a tournament and play. There I'll have three days to kind of get through that 36 holes and so I'll probably go like a 9-18-9 type deal. We'll get there probably a day earlier.

And I haven't seen Greystone yet, so being a rookie or a first-timer here on this tour, the hard part's really just not knowing the golf courses. So you've got to put a little extra work in, you've got to figure out where you're supposed to hit it, where you're supposed to go, greens, pin placements. It's -- I have a little bit of familiarity here, Flint, Pebble of course, but most of the golf courses I'm playing I'm seeing them for the first time. I just have to do my work and figure out how to play the golf courses.

Q. Have the guys on tour here told you anything about that course in advance?

JIM FURYK: No, they're not helping. They're not giving any secrets out.

Q. And then do you have any good stories of playing with SEC football coaches? Next week Nick Saban's there, Kirby Smart from Georgia. Have you played with any SEC football coaches?

JIM FURYK: I'm trying to think. I have a lot of respect for the SEC, obviously a powerhouse. But I went to school in the PAC 12, my wife went to school in the Big Ten and we live right in the middle of SEC country, so makes it a little difficult.

But no, Florida-Georgia game's always in our hometown, Jacksonville. Always enjoy going and being part of the cocktail party. Other than that, I haven't really got to know many of the coaches on that side of things.

One athletic director, I guess our old athletic director at Arizona, Greg Barnes, is now at Alabama. He's won a couple more national championships. We'll forgive him if we have to.

Q. And this summer's the 30th anniversary of Payne Stewart's U.S. Open win. Do you have many memories from playing with Payne Stewart over the years?

JIM FURYK: I do, I do. I didn't maybe get to know Payne as well as many. I was probably, maybe about my fifth year on tour when he passed. But I did have a chance, an opportunity to play with him in the Ryder Cup in '99 and some fun rounds in different events. The Merrill Lynch over in Bermuda where he and Tracey kind of saw Tab and I out at a little Mexican restaurant, you know, in shorts, T-shirts, flip flops. We might have had a pitcher of margaritas or two and really just enjoyed the company.

Got a chance to really know both of them a lot better because of their generosity and just enjoy -- you know what, you're always going to have fun. If Payne was around, he wasn't going to let you mope or hang your head or pout. If that was the case, he was going to give you some crap and wear you out a little bit, tease you, poke fun. He was just a fun-loving guy and a guy who seemed to always have a good time. That's what I remember. When I was around Payne, I was always laughing. If I was upset about something, it definitely changed my outlook on my day.