

**60TH ANNUAL BANK OF AMERICA COLONIAL
Colonial Country Club
Fort Worth, Texas
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Pre-tournament round interviews

AN INTERVIEW WITH BEN CRENSHAW

TODD BUDNICK: We welcome Two-Time Bank of America Colonial Champion Ben Crenshaw, visiting us back here at The Colonial Country Club for the first time since 2002 for the 60th anniversary, and we welcome you back this year, Ben.

You just had a chance to play in the Pro-Am this morning. Talk about what the course looks like today compared to past years.

BEN CRENSHAW: I've never seen it better. We played yesterday with Bruce Devlin, Vincent Allen (phonetic) and Doug Sanders, and Rod Curl (phonetic), and we've never seen the course to be in as good as shape as this. Have pristine conditions, nice and firm, and we hope a bit of breeze blows for The Colonial. It's just a wonderful place.

It's very difficult to build an atmosphere in a place or a site. Some of them have tried very hard. It was evident from the mid-30's, when Marvin Leonard started this place. It's always been a fascinating test of golf.

I don't think there is any question today that, with the distances that people can hit the ball, it may be not quite what it used to be. But my architecture books at home are filled with a recurring theme that says interest supersedes links.

I think players have been fascinated with this golf course with the way that it reminds them of a very traditional eastern way out. The way it's bunkered, and the way the doglegs are, and you have to shape shots, and you have to play. You have to play golf. That's why Mr. Hogan did so well so many times here. It's very unique. It's a very unique place.

It is as welcoming as any place, that in my playing days, you truly feel a certain hospitality here that you don't feel anywhere else. I'm so proud that my name is up on that wall twice.

TODD BUDNICK: You've played in more than half of them so far, which is a great stat, your favorite memory from here.

BEN CRENSHAW: I have so many. I have so many I don't want to bore you too much. Meeting Mr. Hogan. There is no question. I had been lucky enough to spend a little time with him on about five or six different occasions, just in visits. I was actually playing in the tournament that -- the last tournament that he played down in Houston. I watched him practice a few times at Shady Oaks, and I just cherish those memories. I still can't imagine anybody playing like he could. I mean many of us were lucky enough to see it. I'll never forget it.

TODD BUDNICK: We'll take some questions.

Q. This five or six meetings that you had with him was there one particular sit down talk, anything that he said that would --

BEN CRENSHAW: Jeff, I tried the first three times not to say anything about golf. I tried to talk about other things. Other friends and acquaintances. And, you know, if he was going to go one direction, then I might follow. But I made it a point not to try to ask him verbatim something.

But we just talked about people, you know. We talked about Jackie Burke (phonetic) or Jimmy Demerit (phonetic), Lefty Stackhouse, all kinds of people that I knew that he would feel comfortable talking about. So we got along well.

He knew -- obviously Mr. Leonard was so -- Marvin Leonard was so close to him, and I knew Marty so well, his daughter. It was always something I look forward to. I held it so much on a pedestal. But any chance you can converse with him any time was so special because he was -- there was no one like him at all. In both the way that he plays, but his countness (phonetic) was just remarkable. He had this way about him that was very authoritative. A no nonsense. But he meant every word that he said.

But, you know, all of the players, when we saw him occasionally at the dinner here, it would just be unbelievable. Ft. Worth truly loved this man for what he did for this community, all over the world. But very special memories.

Q. No. 5, can you tell me what you hit maybe the last time you won, what you hit there and maybe how that's changed over the years? And is that hole safe from being obsolete?

BEN CRENSHAW: That one is.

Q. It doesn't matter how far you can hit it right?

BEN CRENSHAW: That's right, Bill. There is a few holes here that won't change much. No matter what club or implements that you play with. That is certainly one -- that is one of the greatest holes that I ever seen. That culminates the two previous holes pretty good, too.

But no, question, Bill, the last couple of days we have had a north breeze. I hit a driver both times. I had somewhat of a long iron into the green, but that is kind of how I used to play it.

We could occasionally get by with a 3-wood, in our playing days, if the ground was firm and the wind was crossing a little more left-to-right. But it's usually into you.

But truth be told, I think anyone is trying to make some sort of four and get away from there. It's just a great hole day in and day out.

Q. (Inaudible)?

BEN CRENSHAW: No, the compartment of the fairway holds you in, and the bend of the hole around the trinity, and what's on the left is problematical almost as much as what's on the right. There has been a lot of 6's made through the years from left. And lots of 6's from the right, too, but it is a test.

Q. Ben, we're starting to get into that part of the season where people are looking at Ryder Cup points a little more closely every week. As a former Ryder Cup player and victorious captain, I'm interested in your opinion from what's coming from the other side of the pond, the idea maybe down the road the Ryder Cup should be four days and not three days. I don't know if you heard about that. That's been advanced over there. I guess for the idea of having four days, gate receipts and four days of television, do you think that that's a good idea? Do you think something like that could ever happen?

BEN CRENSHAW: It's the first I've heard of it. You know, the format is very unique. It's all its own. I wouldn't know how to characterize that yet just having heard it. Four days is a lot. I don't know. I don't know how I feel about that. This is truly the first I've heard of it.

The way that the use of the individuals on your team, and how you put them together, and the format for three days, make it entirely unique above anything else.

I wouldn't know why they would want to play four days.

Q. (Inaudible)?

BEN CRENSHAW: I mean, you know, there is no doubt it's very -- you know, you are playing 18 hole matches also that makes it quick and it's accelerated. Just those duration of those holes for three days make it unique. No matter what format you are on. I wouldn't know. I could study that for a while. Three days is pretty good, like the way it is. I don't know. I would think about that.

Q. Ben, good afternoon, I just want to ask you how your game is going right now, what is the state of your game?

BEN CRENSHAW: It's okay. I wish I could play a little bit better. We have a lot of competition on the Senior Tour. Some of these guys can play like you can't believe. We play tougher courses now. I haven't been able to put things together as well as I'd like. I've played decent golf. There is a lot of people who are playing better than I am. But probably a little short of okay, I'd say. The more I talk about it, the worse it gets.

(Laughter).

Q. I'm not sure how to follow that up. You obviously have a lot of fondness for this place. Your fondness for Augusta is well known. You have had great success at both places. Does your feelings for places like that elevate your game. Or do you feel a lot of your feelings arise from the way they seem to suit your game?

BEN CRENSHAW: I don't know. I played okay at Augusta. I wasn't proud at all the way I started out the third day. I knew I could have done better. But it just didn't happen.

But, no, I'm looking forward to playing here. This is a very special year, 60th year. And I thought if I was going to play it again, this might be the year.

If I feel like I hit the ball fairly solid, I can be okay here. But I want to give it one last shot.

Q. I wonder what you think tonight is going to be like, the Champion's dinner?

BEN CRENSHAW: It's always great. It's always great. You know, as you get older, you appreciate the places that you have played, and you are lucky enough to win. But once again it's the treatment that you received through the years. A lot of people who have made this tournament what it is, and how successful it is, and there has been a lot of times, and a lot of effort, through a lot of club presidents, who have really attempted to further the goal that Mr. Leonard had, and they've done a great job.

Q. If Hogan were playing today, with this equipment, what do you think it might be like?

BEN CRENSHAW: It's a fascinating question. We've thought about it. We've talked about it a few times out on the Senior Tour. It might be scary. It depends on how well he putted. But in hitting the ball, it would just be unbelievable. It's very difficult to describe what we saw. But it was

just like a machine gun. A solitary figure out there wanting to make that ball behave. And generally did.

Q. Ben, you're not a guy that tinkered with different putters a whole lot, do you get amused out here that guys switch from week to week or tournament to tournament?

BEN CRENSHAW: I'm not so really, you know, because it's tournament golf and playing, and how you score is so predicated by you how you putt. Some people, their optics are different. They see and feel different things. They are looking for those things. Some people change putters a lot. Some people don't.

But every professional golfer would do anything to putt better. It's a part of the game that never changes. You've got to get the thing in the hole in any way. It doesn't matter whether you've got a long putter, different grip, different, physical and different component. You would do anything to get the ball in the hole. That's still the main part of the game that lifts your confidence more than anything else.

It feels wonderful to be hitting the ball exactly like you want. But if you're not doing anything with it on or around the green, if you look at the Money List, it's not going happen.

Every tournament, you can look at the first 20 places and those guys have had a good feel for that week. It just doesn't change.

Q. (Inaudible)?

BEN CRENSHAW: An incident that I am still paying for dearly, it was in 1979, I was in contention here and I 3-putted the 16th green. It was the third day and I was so mad at myself I walked off the back of the green and this big oil drum full of trash, and I kicked it so hard, and I am still paying for it. I've got an arthritic big toe. I've had it operated on once. I will probably have it again. I was playing with Jerry McGee (phonetic) in 1979. I'm not kidding you. I made full contact with this thing, hobbled over to the 17th tee. I said Jerry, I can't walk. He said what did you do?

I said, I kicked that oil drum so hard. This is throbbing, I can't get my shoe off. He said, I've done that 80,000 times.

I'm not kidding you. I've developed -- I walk on the side of my foot. I am developing some hip problems, my back, it's because of that toe. It's a self inflicted injury right here on the grounds.

Q. A follow up to that (Inaudible)?

BEN CRENSHAW: A glancing blow. This was a full Nelson there.

Q. Some people get arthritis when it rains, I wonder how you feel when you walk through 16; does it flare up then just thinking about it?

BEN CRENSHAW: I've thought about it a million times. I would just like to have that one back. It happened though.

Q. Best putter ever, what does that leave for the rest of us?

BEN CRENSHAW: There is so many wonderful putters in the game, with different methods. Brad Faxon is just one of the most beautiful pure putters that you could ever watch. And Loren Roberts is completely the opposite way. Those two styles are completely different. Brad is open and closed and Loren is straight back through this way. Jackie Burke is still one of the prettiest putters I ever saw. He got very close to the ball, down low. Billy Casper, I couldn't imagine anybody putting better than Billy Casper, or Bobby Locke. Bobby Locke may have been the best.

Jack was pretty good when he needed to be. I mean he hit some of the best approach putts you could every want to see, and vitally important putts. He may have been one of the best.

Q. (Inaudible)?

BEN CRENSHAW: A belief in your own method, and it's the reason why Harvey told me, Harvey Phoneix (phonetic) told me a long time ago, when I was about 14, he said, Ben, never try to look like anybody else when you putt. You develop your own style. It's like swings, too. You have to develop your own style. We all would have loved to have swung a club maybe differently, or had a swing like Payne Stewart or Sam Snead or Tom Purtzer or somebody like that. But we couldn't.

I think the ones that are successful make their own way and Jack got the way of getting underneath it. You can see the line better that way. Because it's what you use under pressure as well.

Q. You talk about this course and how it makes you play golf, in your mind, what's the state of shot making right now, and what do you think the difference is between hitting the ball and playing golf?

BEN CRENSHAW: I don't think there is any question, there is a lot of different places where you have to play so well. Don't get me wrong. I really think that the game has changed quite a bit, the equipment has. It's not what the player's play, what they're given and how -- and adopt a feel for those certain conditions, whether it's shafts or club heads or golf balls, whatever they are playing. They are playing their best, and they are allowing themselves to do what they can do. It's just changed. It's changed quite a bit.

And there is golf courses, I think, that are maybe a little more architecturally vulnerable where that big hitters really don't have an advantage. And there is other places where it may not.

So it's a fascinating and complex -- it's such a problem. But a lot of people think of how to test the best golfers in the world. And they are running out of ideas how to do it, and rightly so.

The architectural soundness in some places, it's going to be a rare thing, whether it's good for anybody else in the game, meaning anybody else but professionals. It's very difficult to build a golf course now and have anybody enjoy it, and then be able to test professionals. It's very difficult, really difficult now. It's no one's fault. It's just gotten longer and longer and longer.

There is an obsolescence that some people think of. I think that's dangerous.

Q. The past week in here we had a couple of interesting conversations with guys who either tinker with equipment or don't. Bob Estes on one end, tinkers every day. Bubba Watson, whatever Ping gives him he hits. Where do you fall in that thing? Can you talk about the dangers of maybe tinkering too much?

BEN CRENSHAW: You do have to play with a certain amount of feel. However, that resonates to your brain and how you can stand over a 6-iron that you just reshafted last week, or a certain lie, or a certain loft, you still have to have the ability to think that you can hit that shot.

Some people, no questions, search and search and search for that right feel. Either they don't feel, or do feel, and they want to get it better and quickly and they keep tinkering. I think a lot of us tinker to a little extent any way. Shafts and weights -- I remember Mr. Hogan saying, you know, the way that irons were, he said an iron is 90 percent shaft. And 10 percent the leading edge going into the ground. It's an amazing statement.

But those two things put together, if you take the shaft, that sets the shaft and the weight of the club, that sets your timing and how it gets through the ground is the other part of that feel that

you are essentially looking for under certain conditions, whether you are in the fairway or just in the rough, how you get through the ball.

So it's no question tinkering -- and with the advent of so many different shafts on the market, it's so unbelievable. There is a new shaft every two weeks, together with the components, there is a lot to try.

Q. You can make yourself crazy?

BEN CRENSHAW: Well, you can. There is so much to try now where it used to be you have certain flex, some steel shafts, that was it. You didn't try so much different. You just went ahead and played. But that's a part of technology though that improved. It's improved a great deal.

TODD BUDNICK: We appreciate your time. Good luck, thanks for coming.

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