

**PODS Championship
Innisbrook Golf Resort
Copperhead Course
Tampa Bay, Fl**

March 11, 2007

Final-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES HOWELL, III

JOE CHEMAZY: We welcome Charles Howell in. A bogey-free 65 this afternoon and our FedExCup points leader just adding to that moving up the charts today. Talk a little bit about the day and what was so good for you. It looked like you hit 15 greens in regulation today.

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Well, first off, I was fortunate to be here this weekend. It didn't really look like I was going to make the weekend plus 2. And struggled a bit on Friday, sort of backed some old swing flaws, I sort of get myself into a bit. And worked those out a little bit, had an obviously much better weekend, no bogeys on the weekend. Sometimes it always doesn't look glamorous, but it's definitely a neat goal to have. A lot of par-saving putts to keep that going.

And then the round today, it was nice to play a little bit early.

We got nine holes of fairly calm winds. You know, the greens now are getting a bit crustier, a bit faster. I would have loved to have one more there coming in especially the one at 16 or 18 to get to 8-under. 7 is probably not enough to do it.

But the boys at the top are still going to have to play well to good it done, because it's not very easy out there on the back 9 right now.

Q. You mentioned some frustrations on Friday, was it just your swing or was it your putter?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Well, more or less the swing. I relied a bit on my putter Thursday and Friday. And it's old habits I get into. I get real jumpy with my legs. I don't have enough weight to keep them grounded. So that's a habit I'll continue to fight. I fought for about 20 years now since I was 7, and I will probably be fighting it the next 20. I do any types of drills I do to get my legs calm, my legs quiet whatnot. It's the same stuff, when the wind comes up a bit that's one thing I've got to be real aware of. But the putter truthfully kept me in there Thursday and Friday for sure.

Q. Does it feel like your having the best season of your life?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Yes, it does. And I finally was able to break through and win a golf tournament. The monkey off my back for that was huge. That monkey was

getting awful heavy. He was getting bigger. He was putting on the weight that I can't. And, you know, because I finished second at Sony, and I was second at San Diego. But the relief to winning Nissan, yes, it was huge.

So with that said, it definitely does. You know, the first time I won, I think it was around my 60th tournament played, and I probably didn't appreciate the difficulty of winning as much, especially not the appreciation I have for it now. Yes, winning again at Nissan was a massive relief.

Q. Besides the winning, if you keep having Top-10's, another win is going to come?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Sure. I certainly hope so. I think I'm probably the poster boy if you get enough second places, you will eventually win. It's nice to be in contention. That's the fun part. Even like the round like today where I teed off today in 35th place to finally eat my way up to the leaderboard and to play the last six or seven holes with a bit of heat on trying to make some birdies. That golf is so much more fun than the golf play playing of struggling, and trying to find it. Let's just have a nice weekend, let's just do this, whatever. That type of golf is so much more fun, when you are in contention and when you have a chance. Now I see the incredible high that the Tiger Woods of the world must live on, because it is definitely a whole lot more fun than finishing in the middle of the pack.

Q. Even the weeks that you didn't win, or finish 1, 2, 3 or 4, whatever here, you've been around on the weekend; at the The Hope I know before Sunday. Do you feel like you should be there now week in and week out, at some point having yourself a chance to win?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: It's getting closer. I still say that I need to keep working on driving the ball in the fairway more often. If you look at all of my stats -- now grant it, I'm hitting driver off the tee a lot, and probably further out there, but I'm not in the fairway enough. So that's one area that I need to improve on.

And then keep working on the short game, and keeping that consistent week in and week out, not have the weeks where the short game is great, and other weeks where it's so so, and then great, and then so so. Just keeping that at a higher level more consistently.

Then the ball in the fairway off the tee. I've worked real hard on the three-quarter shots and the irons, learning how to take some yardage off of those, not hitting everything full or hard. But it's still keeping that short game to a higher level week in and week out.

Q. I know you got two more weeks of playing before playing The Masters, whether or not you can sustain this type of game all the way through that; that you can pique too soon, or do you feel like you're billing up just the way you want to towards that?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: You know, I had a long talk with David on that, on the week off actually. His advice to me, which was pretty good was to take the West Coast as it's over and done with, and we're going to have this week off, which was last week. We are just going to start our season over again. We're just going to start over now, we're here in Tampa, and obviously play the PODS, Arnold Palmer and then the CA and then go to Augusta.

So, for me, I can't look at the year as just as just a big whole stretch of tournaments. It just feels like you are taking a rubber bands and just stretching it and eventually it will pop.

So I've got to break it up into segments there. With that being said, the golf courses are so different on the Florida swing up to Augusta and the West Coast; that being such a massive change with different grasses, et cetera, et cetera, it sort of gets some new things

going just having to play different shots..

Q. Having just shot 65, how good do you think Calc's 62 was yesterday?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: I mean, well, I didn't see it out there. And not just this year, any year I've been here.

No, I never saw 62 around this golf course. It's a tough set of par-3s. You know, the par-5's, they're not the easiest tee balls in the world to have a chance to go at them in two. Truthfully, I think his 62 helped my 65 today. It always helps other players when you see someone shoot a real low round like that, because immediately you think well, heck, if he can do it I can do it. And plus, too, playing a little bit earlier today, I know he played a little bit earlier in the day yesterday. It definitely made a difference for me today at least I can say that. But, man, his round of 62 yesterday, like I said, I didn't see it out there. That's one heck of a round.

Q. Charles, you are talking about working on, taking some things off shots, hitting some three-quarter shots, is that part of that feel that you have been talking about for a couple of years, trying to get that into a game that some have said forever, since you were 7, is too mechanical?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Sure. You know, growing up with David, growing up with the video camera, I've got tapes of me back home when I was 9 of my swing on video. I remember actually distinctly a golf lesson I received when I was 10 from one of David's assistants, was a swing on video, with his critique and the overlay and the voice. I remember me going home and just cry. I'm thinking I got all of this stuff wrong. I remember just sitting in the living room crying.

So, you know, I love mechanics. I love how things work. So, no, you're right for the past couple of years I've tried really to get away from that to get into playing shots, draws, fades, high, low, and I think this year here, the start of this year, it's finally starting to show through a little bit. Toward the end of last year I got to the point where I trusted it on golf course. I didn't always pull it off, but I trusted it enough to try it. And this year the results are starting to show themselves on the course.

Q. It was like 17, 18 weeks ago that you guys were here. It was the fall event. Since then, they were without a sponsor, had to get one, there was some speculation they didn't, the future of the event would be short lived, they are pretty sensitive about, what they went through, was it a seamless transition? Could you tell that this was sort of thrown together? Did it feel like a promising week to The TOUR?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: You know, Gerald Goodman is a good friend of mine. I can't say that about a lot of tournament directors, not because I don't like them, just because I don't know them. I've gotten to know Gerald over the years. I'm a huge Buccaneer fan, so I've spent a lot of time in Tampa, Ronde Barber was a good friend of mine, he was watching me play. Ronde and Gerald are friends. I have a lot of connections through that.

So first off, I really wanted to see the event comeback. I love the golf course. I love the place, and for PODS to step up is huge. I think every player owes them a big thank you. Then as far as the golf course and everything else running, no, to us it looked just like normal. It looked great. Nothing I would change.

Q. Charles, your mechanical inclination to the game, how much of your ability to get more out of your rounds this year is any sort of mental difference, or difference in your thought process or any of that stuff?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Well, it's different in that if I'm working on five things in

my golf swing, and I go on the golf course and things aren't working well, and I hit a few shots, I have a hard time picking between what's wrong. Having simplified things down to basically two things, I'm working on my golf swing, it's easier to pick the right button from two than five.

Then, you know, through the work out done with Lead, and then my caddy Jimmy, who is very familiar with Lead's teachings throughout all of his years with Nick Price, we can pretty much figure it out our own. Still I spend a lot of time with Lead, with his other instructors Kevin Smeltz and Sean Hogan, his assistants.

But it's just a whole lot simpler, it's got to be one of two things, it's not one of five.

Q. One quick follow up. This week, how does it bode for the future of this event in the spring?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Oh, this event is only going to get better. The golf course is fantastic. I haven't heard one player say they didn't like the golf course, if not love it. You even hear thoughts that this is the best golf course that we play in Florida. So I think it's fantastic. And I think the whole Florida swing really is getting a whole lot better. You look at playing PGA National last week for Honda. I still think this is the better date though, this PODS, especially coming off the West Coast, it's hard to come back and play that first week. Their date here is fantastic. The golf course holds its own every year. This will continue to grow and grow.

Q. Charles, may I ask you to look ahead to next week, how do you keep the momentum that you had these past two days to the Arnold Palmer?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Well, you know, first off, it's nice to sleep in my own bed for a golf tournament, so I will be headed home which is nice. You know, I like Bay Hill, I like the golf course. In the past you have heard some players complain about it and didn't like it. But I do like it. It's special for me, in the generation I grew up in to play a golf tournament that Arnold Palmer's hosts. He is a guy that was an icon. I've watched all of his videos and his highlights. So I have's gotten to play in Byron Nelson's tournament and meet him; played in Jack Nicklaus's and met him, and now Arnold Palmer's, so that's special.

Then apart from that, once again it's a tough test. So pars are going to be good scores at Bay Hill just like they are here. You won't see guys run over that, especially with the two holes going from going from par-5's to par-4's. So it's not hard to get up for a good golf courses like that that are tough tests.

Q. What seems to be the prevailing trend right now, you guys are getting beaten up pretty good? Do you like this?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Absolutely. We play enough tournaments where it takes 18 to 20-under to win. It's nice to see 5-under win last week. Let's say 10-under win this week. Bay Hill next week with those two par-5s to par-4's, what 8-underish may win there now. I think that's something good to see. And you won't see under par win up there in Jacksonville, I don't think, later in the year either.

Yes, I think it's good. It rewards a par. And I think the fans like to see that on TV, too, you know, struggling for some pars, and when you make a birdie it actually means something.

Q. At some point during the round, did you think I've got to try to get this number to have a chance to win? I know you said you would like one or two more?

CHARLES HOWELL, III: Yes, No. 14 I wanted to get it to 8-under. Not even that 8-under will do it, and not take anything away from the guys at the top. Just to get it

done, make them see it on the leaderboard. Like I said, 10, 11-under is probably going to win the golf tournament. I wanted to get to 8.

JOE CHEMAZY: Thank you.
