

PODS Championship
Innisbrook Golf Resort
Copperhead Course
Tampa Bay, Fl

March 9, 2007

Second-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOUG LABELLE, II

JOE CHEMYCZ: We welcome Doug LaBelle. Even par round of 71 for you today, Doug. Just talk about the first 2 days out there. Guys have discussed the difficulty of the golf course and the conditions and then we'll let them ask you some questions.

DOUG LABELLE, II: I'm not doing anything special, I'm just hitting a lot of fairways and a lot of greens which is typically my game. I did that last week and finished tied for 13th and, you know, one of the things I've been working on is my short game in the off season and that's certainly helped me the last few weeks. This week I happen to be hitting the ball a lot better than last week so that's certainly helping me play the golf course a little bit smarter. A little bit more conservative. As many fairways and as many greens as I can hit, that's what I'm trying to do.

Q. The conditions seem to be as close to perfect as we can get. Nobody is doing much damage out there. Is the golf course set up that difficult? Are they tucked pins? Why are we not getting more birdies?

DOUG LABELLE, II: There is probably a half dozen pins you really can't get to and most of those are on the par-3s. It's very difficult to get close to some of the flags, and if you try to go at it, and you make a miscue, more than likely you are going to make 5, or bogey I should say. So, I mean, for me, knowing that maybe my short game is not the best part of my game, I'm working on trying to make that better. I'm just playing to the fat part of the green and I know if I can just get the read and the speed that I shouldn't make any bogeys. Occasionally I'll hit wayward shot and try to make par. But for the most part, it's been hitting the ball right where I've been looking to hit it and that certainly helps.

Q. Talk about what it likes to be where you are here now, and as a rookie and how important, you tied for fourth coming out of the box in Hawaii. Did that take any pressure off of you? What's this year been like for you?

DOUG LABELLE, II: Well, it's been better than expected to start, for sure. I would be lying to you if I sat here and said I expected that to happen that early. But I didn't. I told my dad the three things that I could block out coming out here is the money that

we're playing for, because I've never been a PGA TOUR member. And maybe the crowds when they are big. And maybe who I am playing with if it's a big named player. And if I could block those three things out, it's just another golf course. So far this year that's what I've done and that's allowed me to play some good golf early. So that's been a benefit for me.

Q. Have you played with anybody big so to speak?

DOUG LABELLE, II: Yes, I got paired with Vijay on Saturday at Torrey Pines. That was earlier than I expected. He was a joy to play with, very respectful. That's why he is as good as they come. He is a nice guy but, he is a tremendous talent. It was fun to watch. I was out there trying to do my thing as well. I couldn't sit and watch him too much or I was going to shoot sky high.

Q. Did you have any of those feelings walking by some guys on the range any time this year, like the feeling you're trying to block out the so-called big guys?

DOUG LABELLE, II: No, not really, this is my ninth year as a pro. I have played in a few PGA TOUR events. I've played with Tiger a long time ago. I've been not around these guys a lot, but I've been in some tournaments with them. Playing down in Australia, Retief Goosen, Sergio Garcia and Ernie Els. Playing in Nissan one year I Monday qualified when Tiger was there. So I've been at least out there, it wasn't like my first experience in '97 when I qualified as an mateur. That was certainly an eye opener. I did a lot of gawking that week to say the least.

Q. That sounds like a lot of stuff to be blocking out. Those aren't small little things you talk about blocking out. Do you walk around with ear plugs, shut your eyes between each shot? How do you keep all of that stuff?

DOUG LABELLE, II: I don't know, I think I've been fortunate that I haven't had to be thrown right into it because the finishes that I've had that were so well, I kind of backed into them, I kind of backed into them I played well on the weekend or on Sunday.

So in Hawaii, the 16 year old Tadd Fujikawa was playing great. There wasn't anybody watching our group. Not to mention, I came from barely making the cut to finishing 4th.

I've been fortunate that I haven't been thrown into that yet. So that's made it certainly easier to deal with it. It's never going to be easy, but the more I can just stay this way, with blinders on, I think the better off I'm going to be. I try not to watch leaderboards. That just makes me nervous, especially if I'm close to the lead.

Q. Have you supplanted Dan Pohl as the most famous golfer from Mt. Pleasant?

DOUG LABELLE, II: We have three that played well, Kelly Robins, and Cindy Figg-Courrier and Dan Pohl, they've been great for the City of Mt. Pleasant to put Mt. Pleasant on the map, for golf any way, and for me to be part of that. I feel honored it's a small town of about 25,000 people. I don't know if there is something in the water up there or not.

Q. What kind of a golf course did you learn the game on? What's the best track in Mt. Pleasant?

DOUG LABELLE, II: The one I grew up on is not the best track, but it was 6000 yards from the back tees and it was short and it was tight. That's probably why I'm a straight hitter and that I don't hit it very far. That's what I grew up doing, and that's what I know how to do.

Q. What's the name of that course?

DOUG LABELLE, II: Mt. Pleasant Country Club, very unique.

Q. How did they think of that?

DOUG LABELLE, II: I don't know.

Q. You talked about how you are hitting a lot of the fairways and the greens, talk about what happens when you don't, the difficulties out there when you do miss the fairways and greens?

DOUG LABELLE, II: The rough is a little bit spotty. But for the most part, if you hit it in there it's going to be tough for me to get it to the green. That puts a lot of pressure on my driving. But nothing that I haven't been used to since I was playing as a kid. So I mean it's something that I'm aware of, off the tee I know that I got to get it in the fairway, or it's going to be tough for me to get it to the green.

But at the same time I've been fortunate the few times that I've missed the fairways, that I've been lucky to have some decent lies. I mean my playing partner today, seemed like every time he hit it in the rough, it was like this (indicating). Where a few times I missed the fairway, I could get it up by the green. I think I got a couple of good breaks.

Q. When you played with Vijay did you get the sense he had any idea who you were? You said it was a nice experience? What was the interaction like?

DOUG LABELLE, II: Well, my first experience with Vijay was Tuesday night in the locker room. I was looking up at the message board at my tee time, and he comes walking in wondering who he was paired with and I just kind of did a doubletake, and I introduced myself to him, and he said, hey, good playing in Hawaii. It totally caught me off guard. It caught me so off guard that I forgot to congratulate him about the Mercedes.

So the next day, I felt pretty stupid, so the next day I went up after the Pro-Am and introduced myself again and told him congratulations on winning the Mercedes. That was my first encounter with him.

That was Tuesday and Wednesday, and then to be paired with him on Saturday, I wouldn't say we were best of friends but I would say that it certainly was more comfortable than meeting him for the first time.

Q. Is that kind of welcome to the TOUR, the fact that Vijay, you were on Vijay's radar?

DOUG LABELLE, II: No, not really. It surprised me that one of the big names, one of the Big 5 that play, that he actually watches to see -- he sees who plays well and remembers. That's probably what surprised me the most. I mean I can't remember how everybody plays ever. I was surprised he remembered.

Q. Billy Mayfair said that you were a guy who thought you could do real well out here, do you have some history with him?

DOUG LABELLE, II: He and I practice at the same course in Phoenix, Scottsdale. I got to know him probably when I first moved there maybe six or eight years ago I met him and spoke with him for probably two hours when he was out on the putting green. I just sat there and picked his brain. He allowed me to do that. I didn't know him at all. We happened to be at this other golf course, where he used to play, and I used to play, and now that we are at the same golf course, I see him more frequently. He has been generous with his time, generous with helping me out with any information that I need. I'm asking him questions of being a rookie on the Nationwide Tour four years ago. He

has given me a lot of good information to kind of put into use out here. And even when I was a rookie on the Nationwide Tour.

So I think that's kind of where it started. And we haven't played together a whole lot. But we played together a handful of times out there. But more importantly he is a quality individual, and I respect his opinion. He is a veteran and he has been out here quite a long time, so how can you not listen to a guy like that.

Q. What has been the most eye opening thing of being out here? I know you try to gather as much information when you get out here. I'm sure people can't tell you exactly how it is.

DOUG LABELLE, II: I would say just really trying to to manage your time. With the Nationwide Tour, is a great stepping stone for being out here. But some of the extra curricular's you just got more people, more media, more things to do. People maybe wanting tickets to come watch. You just get a lot more of that. Trying to really manage your time and kind of -- you have an agenda, go out, you do this, you do this, you do this, and you're done and leave.

But sometimes it's hard because you normally only have an hour a day of extra stuff that you might have to do that you weren't planning on doing and all of a sudden it's 5:00 and you got to meet some people for dinner at 5:30. That would be the biggest adjustment that comes to mind right now.

JOE CHEMYCZ: Take us through your round, you started on 10, made birdie on 11

DOUG LABELLE, II: 11, yes I hit a good shot. Good sand wedge into to four or five feet and made that for birdie. It was nothing special, I hit the fairway and laid it up, made the putt. So I wish I could do that on every hole, but that's not the case.

16, I drove it in the left rough and then hit an average shot into the left bunker. Hit a poor bunker shot and 2-putted for bogey.

I that that's probably one of the toughest holes out here. Visually you kind of have to take a more aggressive line than maybe what you would like to. So I haven't driven it that well on that hole, I've missed that fairway both days. I can make par from the rough, I can't make par from the water.

6, those are two of the best shots that I hit all day. I hit a perfect 3-wood off the tee and a perfect 5-iron into the green and it was just maybe a half a club too much and it rolled off of the back of the green. I hit an average chip to maybe five feet and missed the putt. I got some good breaks yesterday and today and that was a bad break. I hit the perfect shots and walked away with 5.

Birdie on 8, par-3, I'm going middle of the green out here and I happened to pull it just a little bit. It rolls up to about two feet. Just tapped it in, said I will take it and just kept going.

JOE CHEMYCZ: Anything else?

Q. Before you won on the Nationwide Tour what had been your all time career golfing highlight, most memorable moment?

DOUG LABELLE, II: I'm trying to come up with a good one here. I think probably most memorable moment would be -- I finished tied for second in that same event my first year out there. It's my most memorable moment, more because I wanted to learn from some mistakes that I had made that week. So I think '03 was my first year. That same exact tournament that I had won four years prior, I was leading the golf tournament with nine holes to go and I had 20 putts on my back 9 to lose by one. That same tournament.

So every time I went back there, that was kind of my motivation. So not only trying to learn from my mistakes, but that was also kind of my most memorable moment because

I knew that I could win out there, and I knew that I could get the job done if I just eliminated a few mistakes.

So I would kind of say that's my most memorable moment.

Q. You talked about having backdoored your way into your strong finishes. Regardless of how it shakes out the rest of today, you are going in the weekend in the middle of it. Is there any sense of apprehension or curiosity to see how you handle this situation?

DOUG LABELLE, II: You know, I'm not real sure. I'll have a better feel for that tomorrow. I know I'm going to go home and get some rest. I didn't sleep very well last night at all. I had an issue with a ruling that might have been improper, and I confronted the rule official this morning about it because I didn't want to -- because if it was an infraction, then I was disqualified.

So I came in this morning and went right to them to find out if everything was okay. It was a situation yesterday where Michael Putnam and I were right next to each other, and I marked my ball. I moved it for him, I marked it, moved the mark over, and then I went over, instead of placing it, or hanging onto it, I just dropped it because we were in a hurry because we were falling behind.

I wanted to make sure that that wasn't an infraction. And it wasn't so I was able to come out and play today.

So I knew that by asking them that there was a good chance that I could get disqualified, or that they were going to say it's okay. I figured it was going to be okay, but I wanted to make sure. I didn't sleep well last night. I got about three hours, so I'm just ready to go back to the hotel and get some rest.

JOE CHEMYCZ: What hole was that?

DOUG LABELLE, II: That was on No. 6 yesterday.

Q. I'm sorry, instead of placing it at your marker you dropped it down then picked the marker up?

DOUG LABELLE, II: After I had marked it, I took it off to the side, so that way I wouldn't clean it, while he was going to play, and I just dropped it off to the side instead of placing it on the ground or holding it in my hand.

We were falling behind, and we were probably going to get put on the clock, so I was trying to hurry up and get my yardage. So in the process of that that was a little bit quicker than maybe hanging onto it. There wasn't any mud on the ball, there was nothing wrong with that. That was kind of what was the issue.

JOE CHEMYCZ: The sixth fairway?

DOUG LABELLE, II: The sixth fairway yesterday. So to answer your question, no apprehensions that I can think of yet.

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