

**59<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BANK OF AMERICA COLONIAL**  
**Colonial Country Club**  
**Fort Worth, Texas**  
**May 17, 2005**

**Pre-tournament-round interviews**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE FLESCH**

THE MODERATOR: We welcome defending champion, Steve Flesch, to the 2005 Bank of America Colonial.

Steve, first let's revisit last year's win, talk a little about that and what it did for you at that time.

STEVE FLESCH: Boy, winning always breeds confidence, especially at a place like Colonial.

I've always played well here. I've always felt like it was a place I could win. You know, it just suits my game. I feel really comfortable, obviously, here. Length isn't as such a premium on this golf course, which is nice anymore. It's a nice change of pace, but it's still a long golf course, relatively speaking.

You know, one of the things I played the front 9 today. One of the nicest things, I just told one of the tournament officials, is that nothing has changed. That's what you can always count on that here. It's okay to add a little bit of yardage here and there, but the tournament is the same. Everything is the same. The course is the same. It's just a good test of golf still.

I think that's why they always have a great field. It's always a great week for them.

THE MODERATOR: You have just the one Top-10 this year, a Top-4 at the FBR Open, yet you've made over \$400,000, are you happy with your position up to this point in the season?

STEVE FLESCH: No, plain and simple. I don't think I've played very well at all this year. But there are a lot of reasons. I'm trying my best. It just hasn't come together. It seems like I'm always fighting one poor round a week. Just in Wachovia, I shot 4-over the first round. Then I shot 2-under the rest of the week. Just one round kind of hasn't been cooperating that well for me this year.

But, you know, I can't say that I'm doing anything really poorly. But, you know, if I had to put my finger on one thing, I don't think I'm putting as well as I was last year. But I'm still hitting it fine. It's just a matter of getting a few to go in. It's just a fine line between it anymore.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Last year in this tournament, did you feel you were putting the same way?

STEVE FLESCHE: It's always a little temperamental. I'm one of those guys who -- I know I have a good stroke, a lot of times I'm just trying to find a putter that feels good to me. It's more a feel thing than anything. I try a lot of putters out, and I bring three or four with me sometimes because I know I'm not going to be satisfied if I only bring one. If it doesn't cooperate, it's out. They are all on waivers with me. I've said that in a couple of articles. I don't have any devotion to any of them.

A lot of it is just plain and simply feel, you know. That, I think, is why I struggle with my putting because I switch putters a lot. But at the same time, when it's good, it's really good. So it's just a matter of getting it all to blend at the right time.

Q. So even one that wins for you, how long does that stay in your bag after winning here?

STEVE FLESCHE: Well, even last year, I don't know if you guys remember, I used 2 putters winning here last year. I used Scotty Cameron model on Thursday/Friday. And on Odyssey model on Saturday/Sunday. You know, it probably don't matter what I use. I can use an old Otie Kirsner (phn) or something. But that's why it lasted two rounds of the Memorial and then I was onto something else.

What I won here with on Saturday and Sunday was out two rounds later, a week later at the Memorial, so.

If it isn't working -- like I say, if it isn't working, it's out. That's just how I've always been. I figure there's got to be something there that is going to work better or feel better. It's never the player. That's the way I look at it.

Q. You talk about this course never changes, and also the confidence it's bred from success, what is your mindset, is it different now coming back this year since you've had the success that you've had here last year, and that you won here last year and knowing things are the same?

STEVE FLESCHE: I'm always confident playing here. Last year, coming in, I think I've played well almost every year I've been here. Even though I won last year, I'm still confident to come back because I just like the way the course sets up. I just feel comfortable with all of the tee shots. I know what to expect, the course is there in front of you. It's the type of course I grew up on, and I enjoy playing.

So even if I was playing my worst golf coming in here, I think I would be comfortable coming in here. It's kind of like coming home actually.

Q. Here is question I know that you've probably heard many times, the defending champion, hasn't been repeated since Hogan, talk about that task and trying to accomplish that?

A. Well, it's even hard when you are reminded every time somebody writes an article. Even walking off the first tee today, Randy Smith, is a local pro here in Dallas said, you see that? What is it '46 or '47 or something he won. Hogan is the last time to repeat. I'm like, thanks. Like I don't already know that. But he said, well, you're the only guy that has a chance this week. And I said, you're right. So that's a good way to look at it. Hey, it's got to be done again by somebody, especially if you like the course as much because I do.

Q. Steve, how do you close the deal? Take us back to last year? Is there a secret? Is there a trick to closing the deal when you're coming down the stretch? Or just be the last one standing?

STEVE FLESCHE: The hardest part about Colonial is when the winds get swirling around out there. You know, not that you can play aggressive on any of the holes, but there is certainly holes that you have to pick and choose coming in. 15, is really not a hole you can be aggressive on. 16 is. 17, 18, depending on what the winds are doing, can be really easy or really difficult.

So last year I had kind of good luck coming in. Even though I made bogey on 17, I hit a poor shot. But, you know, I've only won twice, so I can't really proclaim to know too much about closing a deal. One of them was in a playoff. And last year I outlasted Chad.

I don't know, if winning was as easy as Vijay and some of these guys. You probably need to be asking those guys that. I just try and play my own game and not do anything that makes me uncomfortable at the end of the tournament.

If I'm in contention, I don't want to try to hit a shot that I'm not real comfortable trying to pull off, or if I don't feel the percentages are that good. I try to make an aggressive swing with the shot I know. Even though I can't get it inside 10 feet, I still want to hit a shot I'm comfortable hitting. That's my only advice when you are coming down, trying to close it out.

Q. You talk about closing the deal, in weeks where you've won, when have you gotten the feeling, hey, this is a special week? Does it happen early? Do you not realize it to Sunday? Is it different? When do you get that feeling like, hey, this could be my week?

STEVE FLESCHE: Well, in New Orleans I really never had a feeling except on Sunday when I was three or four holes out into my last round, and I was 3-under-par and the wind was gusting.

But here last year, I don't know, I was abnormally patient because that's not really one of my strong suits on the golf course. But all week I felt patient and everything that was going on. Bogeys weren't really bothering me because you are going to make a few out here. I was probably in the lead the whole week, which, you know, I think you pretty much know after two or three days of being around the lead, it could be a good week for you, obviously.

I just think it's a feeling about comfort coming to play here is what helped me last year. I just love playing here. It's a lot like the course that I grew up on which kind of has a calming effect as well.

Q. Bear with me, this might be a little on the stupid side, but over the years has shot making gone down in your eyes, and maybe in terms of the ball, now aren't the balls like no spin, and I am wondering if that affects shaping the ball and has that changed at all?

STEVE FLESCHE: Well, those are two good points that I talk about constantly but I feel like I'm a little bit of a dinosaur because when I say, guys aren't shaping shots anymore. Everybody is like, well, the balls are different back then. I'm like whoa, exactly.

But a lot of the guys that are winning still -- you know, there is not a lot of 22, 23, 24 year old guys winning right now. I think that has a lot to do with the fact that they haven't grown up learning how to shape shots. You still have to shape shots to the pins that are tough out here on TOUR. Even though the balls don't curve as much, and they are going so far, to get it close on TOUR you have to be able to shape your irons out of the middle of the green back to the hole. Vijay is awesome at doing that. So is Tiger, all of those guys. Colonial calls for that, especially because distance is in place at a premium here.

It's like Hilton Head. Here and Hilton Head, the winning scores, year in and year out, are higher than, you know, what they proclaim monsters like Doral, 24-under is winning. There is nothing monstrous about 24-under, if you ask me. The course is 7300 or 7400, 24-under par. Last year, I won 11-under.

This year 7-under won at Hilton Head. If that isn't a good indication that you don't have to build courses now a million miles long to account for the fact that the ball is going so far, I don't know a better way to prove it.

But the ball has really changed the way guys play. I play with some of the guys like the Kentucky Golfers. They are unbelievable players, but they hit it as far as they can, and as high as they can. When the wind is blowing harder, they just hit it harder. That's just how a lot of the juniors grew up playing. They are not trying to knock down cuts into the wind. A lot of that, I think, a tremendous amount of that has to do with the equipment changes.

The equipment itself, the irons and woods, make it harder to curve the ball because they are made so much better.

And the balls don't spin as much, so it's harder to curve them. They still curve, believe me, on Wednesday, when I play pro-ams, those balls still curve.

But for us, it's tough to play them like that.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions?

Q. What is the most putters you have gone through in a season? What number are you at this year? Is there anybody more turning toward Arnold Palmer than you?

STEVE FLESCHE: Well, I usually bring four with me a week. I'm already on my second one this week.

What I do on Tuesday and Wednesday is I just eliminate them, you know. If I hit a couple of putts I don't like, it's out. That's kind of how I do it.

If I get on a run with one -- last year, actually, I used one at the end of the year for three or four months. That's almost a marriage with me. I don't know. It's not that I'm --

Q. Fickle?

STEVE FLESCHE: I don't know. I can't explain it. I rely so much on the feel of my golf game that if it doesn't look right, or if I just, you know, if I don't like the color of it, I just don't use it.

Q. (Inaudible)?

STEVE FLESCHE: I used 2 putters last week at Wachovia. That's the other thing, the Dale survey people, that means nothing to me. It's tough on them because whatever I saw on Thursday usually it will end up there on Sunday. So those numbers to me mean nothing. I used a putter Friday through Sunday that I used in the first three rounds here last year.

So there is always two old faithfuls that go with me, that I played well with. One of the putters that I have with me this week, actually that I'm using right now is the putter I finished fourth with at the FBR in Phoenix. There is two Scotty Cameron's that always go with me, and there is usually two wild cards in there, too.

Q. How many this year? 10?

STEVE FLESCHE: Yes, probably 10.

Q. (Inaudible)?

STEVE FLESCHE: Not 10 that have made the starting lineup. Probably five made the starting lineup. I mean I've tried 30.

Q. What about over the course of a year?

STEVE FLESCHE: It depends, in 2000, I think I used two putters the whole year. Of course, I played good, too. Maybe that's teaching me something. There is a lesson in there somewhere.

But, you know, even last year, as a good a year I had, I bet I used 8 or 10 over the course of the year. You know, I'm just not loyal to a certain look or a certain type. I use anything from an 8802 looking putter that really swings, to a based balance Odyssey 2-Bball. It all just depends on kind of how I am feeling. I don't know anybody else that jumps around as much as I do. It's kind of a game with me, really.

The Titleist ball guy, they don't know what ball to put in my locker each week. Nobody knows what putter I'm using. Drivers are usually a wild card too, but I'm settled into a Cleveland Launcher right now that's really good.

Q. Steve, I know your involved with some of the cancer screening stuff here that's going on on the course, can you just talk a little bit about that with your past and how that's kind of become an important thing to you?

STEVE FLESCH: Yes. Years ago I was diagnosed with having some sunspots called AK's, actinic keratosis. I teamed up with Derm Mclabs (phn) this year. They have a product called kerac (phn) which basically it's not so much a skin cancer awareness program. It's a sun protected awareness program. They want everybody to just be aware to protect themselves from the sun. They have a booth this week. The sponsors are there at the kerac booth, where they are taking ultraviolet screenings, pictures of your face, and they have a dermatologist in there doing full time screenings all the way through Sunday for everybody with sunscreen and everything to make everybody aware that they need to protect themselves from the sun. I'm in there on Wednesday afternoon for a couple of hours to meet media and fans and whatnot. Having been diagnosed with having some AK's, and getting them treated early on, you don't want them to go untreated because they could turn into skin cancer. That's basically the whole awareness of the program. We want to make everybody cover up. Especially in the golf community, as much as everybody is out in the sun. You got to cover up. Hopefully it won't get to the point where you have to be treated with kerac, but we have a dermatologist there to do screenings and check everybody out to make everybody safer.

Q. Following up on that, so you are all clear now?

STEVE FLESCH: Well, I'm clear. I'm still a mess, but I'm clear. I'm just at high risk being a fair skin white eyed guy, you know, red hair. I'm just a high risk guy. That's the biggest thing. There is so many people thinking, oh, I'm just going out with the kids in the yard for an hour, I'll be fine. But that's when you can really get hurt.

If nothing else, we want to make parents aware that they need to protect their kids. Really, the exposure that I'm getting now isn't hurting me as much as the exposure when I was a kid, if parents aren't protecting kids as much. Your kids get sunburned and that's what comes back to haunt you in 15 or 20 years.

It's just an awareness program. I'm glad to be a part of it. I think we are doing six sponsorship tests this year at various events. We did one at Phoenix. We did one at New Orleans. We are here this week. It's been fun. If nothing else, we just want to handout sunscreen and remind everybody to protect themselves.

Q. Following up with the putter, how can you already be on your second one of this week? Did you change during your practice round today?

STEVE FLESCH: Yes, I carried three in the practice round today. I played nine holes, two putters. You got to weed them out somehow. It's kind of like a college class. Everybody gets weeded out by test grades and stuff, I just do it by testing them out on the course.

Q. When did you become so nonlinear with your equipment, when did you start all of that?

STEVE FLESCHE: Always been. Always tinker. When I go home, I can't stand to hit the balls. Vijay, I mean, he has hit 8 million more balls than I have. When I go home, I don't hit one golf ball on the range. Where I live, I just play holes. I live inside a loop of about six holes and when I drop the kids off to school in the morning I come home, jump on the cart and I ride out on this loop, and I hit 6 or 8 drivers. Go hit 3 or four a balls on the green, chip, putt, go to the next hole. I kind of do that for about an hour and a half, 2 hours, and I go get the kids from school.

But I'm testing balls at home, what type of Titleist ball I want to use. I don't have just my staff bag on there, I have another staff bag on the back with 6, 8 drivers. I mean it's a mess. I just enjoy doing that. It's my release. That's my way of working on my game.

If I had only 14 clubs, and went out to the range and hit balls for five hours and came home and worked out, man, I would get bored doing that.

So I would rather go out, have fun, try something new each day. I don't believe, what they are seeing a lot of with new equipment, you have to compromise on one thing to gain something. You got to give up distance to gain control. I don't buy that. I don't think Vijay, Tiger, those guys, are giving up anything. They are playing at such high level. Grant it, they are unbelievable talented, but those guys aren't giving up distance to grain control of their golf ball and stuff. And I don't believe just because I'm a shorter hitter than those guys, that I have to. So that's why I'm constantly working. I'm trying to get better. Grant it, I feel sometimes maybe jumping around with equipment hurts me. I will be the first to admit it. I'm bored, if I'm going home, coming out with the same 14 clubs. That just doesn't excite me to go home and hit balls for two hours. I would rather not go to the golf course than do that. It even has something to do with the fact that I played for 24 years or something, played the game. It doesn't excite me so much to just hits 7-irons for an hour. You know, give me a break. I really watch Sports Center.

Q. Do you find yourself ever tinkering with a 1-iron or is it extinct in your bag?

STEVE FLESCHE: No, actually I just played nine holes with Tim Herron, he was carrying a 1-iron. We were calling him Sandy Lyle. He was probably the best guy I've ever seen hit a 1-iron. He brings it out for this tournament because it's such a useful club. No 1-irons, no chance. I don't even carry a 2-iron anymore. I'm vertically challenged with long irons. I'm tinkering with rescues and 5-woods is what I mess with. Even that's settled this week. It's always a putter issue with me. When I find one that works, I'll stick with it until it goes sour, then it's out. That's just a deal.

Q. What does your garage look like and what does your wife think about your collection of clubs?

STEVE FLESCHE: It's all in the basement and that's where she says to keep it. It wouldn't fit in the garage and still be able to get the cars in. No, there is probably a hundred, 100 putters in there, a hundred drivers. It's a mess. It's disorganized, but I know where everything is. It's like the desk in an office that's got 8 million things on it, but I can go right to wherever it is. I have the m categorized by brand and model and stuff. But it's not organized looking to the layman, let's put it that way.

THE MODERATOR: Everybody set?

STEVE FLESCHE: Thank you.

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