
**Zurich Classic of New Orleans
English Turn Golf Course
New Orleans, LA
April 25, 2006**

Pre-tournament quotes:

AN INTERVIEW WITH KELLY GIBSON

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Kelly, for joining us for a few minutes in the media center at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans.

You've been really involved with this relief from Katrina. Especially with your Feed The Relief First, why don't you just touch on that a little bit and we'll get into a little more deeper details on the questions.

KELLY GIBSON: Okay. Thanks for having me here Joan. Thanks for everybody being here.

It was a very unusual experience for a lot of people here in New Orleans.

My story was basically that I was in Milwaukee doing a charity fund raiser for Skip Kendall Children's Hospital, and this storm had turned into a Category 5. At that point I was trying to evacuate my wife via phone.

And when the wind started picking up, I was trying to locate people; my family, her family, friends. And, you know, things were kind of falling apart there.

Fast forward that story. She disappeared for 9 and a half hours. Parents disappeared for eight hours. And this thing kept growing and growing and growing through the night.

So I had to tee off in this Pro-Am the next morning, then I'm getting text messages during the Pro-Am that the levies are breaking, and this catastrophe is unfolding.

I was like I need to get out of here, but there is no where to go. I located her the morning of the storm, and then got her the last rental car out of Opelousas to Houston, get her a flight to Milwaukee, and by that time the City was basically melting as everybody saw on television.

I tried to reach out to every major producer that I knew, trying to see if there was any kind of way I could be a person that could help.

I saw some of these national media types that really didn't know the grid of the City, and I saw some locals, and all of a sudden we started getting a local feed in Milwaukee from WDSU, our low affiliate here.

So when she got there, I was just torn apart. We couldn't locate people. I said we got to do something about this, how can we do this?

She is very good with computers, so we immediately started emailing everybody that we had ever come in contact through my career as a golfer, and even college friends, people I graduated college from, and try to reach out and say, hey, we're going to have to have a big effort here on helping, and we immediately decided to started a charity.

And we didn't know really which direction we were going to go in, but she came up with the name.

I'm sitting there watching this, I'm like, who is taking care of the people who are helping the people?

It was my first focus point. I said, who is going to take care of the police officers, they've lost everything too? Who is going to take care of the fireman, the guy that's in the water, where is the food for them?

There was no food or nothing. As everybody knows now there was no clothes. There was no houses still for a lot of people.

So we started Feed The Relief. It just happened. We applied on AOL for the naming rights. I had a friend in Houston that helped facilitate that. We applied for email accounts, and we did this all in a matter of a day or two.

I was literally getting sick watching this on television, because we couldn't find anyone.

My parents had gotten out of town, they stayed with my brother who is a doctor in Baton Rouge. Some of my family wound up in Lake Charles.

I had a brother that wound up missing for four-and-a-half days which his car broke down in Kenner and he just walked back to his apartment.

So it just kind of evolved. And then I sent out text messages to -- people started emailing me back, and I got a text message from the caterer for the PGA TOUR, a company called Hole-In-One catering which is a gentleman by the name of Cary Sowers. He is their sales and marketing director.

He said if there is anything you need from me, let me know.

I said, we need food. Can you make that happen? I text messaged him back. I had a local telephone, I text messaged him back my hotel phone, and he was I think in California, in LA. He diverted two trucks from Portland, Oregon that were headed to the Tampa Bay tournament to New Orleans. And then he diverted -- or he sent two trucks from LA to New Orleans, and we flew home to Baton Rouge and wound up securing a police escort at what became kind of the New Orleans line there, the state trooper line, and they escorted us in.

Excuse me, I'm sorry, I'm having a little allergy here. They escorted us into Bucktown, and wound up sleeping on the levy the first night in 95 degrees.

I told a few people, it's the first time I've ever slept outside without the influence of alcohol. You can leave that one out though. It usually makes somebody chuckle.

When we came into town, the sheer magnitude was just -- it shocked me. We didn't know what we were getting into, obviously. When we showed up at the Coast Guard compound they had military people out there with machine guns, and we had these 18-wheelers. They said what are you doing?

I said, well, we're here to feed you. They didn't know it. I didn't know it. But John Labruzzo, state representative, was also an involved in this. And he had contacted me and said -- I skipped that part of the story. He contacted me and he kind of facilitated where we were setting up.

He said, we can use you in Bucktown. I said, you got it. We wound up setting up on this levy plateau there. We were just going to set up a feeding station in that area that weren't flooded. And when the Coast Guard saw that we had food, we were escorted right into their compound, and we wound up, within two days, we were feeding over a thousand military personnel, which included DEA, Coast Guard primarily, some Navy, SWAT teams from the Coast Guard.

The compound they had set up, really started extending out beyond that central area. The Coast Guard compound there in Bucktown had been looted. They took out 41 looters right after the storm. They were still in the process of trying to get their facility back up and running when we showed up. Shortly after that, things just progressed.

I actually met with the Vice-President of the United States. The commanders were blown away by our hospitality. I was personally on the hook for quite a bit of money. I was the one who ordered the food, and you have to pay the caterers. They are in it for a living.

So I started reaching out to people that I knew could help. David Toms immediately called me and said, hey, what's the situation?

I said, well, this is what I plan on doing.

And I said I'm kind of on the hook here pretty good. He said, well, we're raising a lot of money, I'm going to send you a check for \$50,000 and that relieved a lot of my stress. Then I knew I was in the game. I was really going to follow through on this.

I didn't know if we were going to last two days, three days, four days, five days. My game plan was to do something. I didn't want to sit back at this moment, in my career, in my life, and not do something. I think I owed it to the City of New Orleans.

To wrap up the story, it progressed after that. A FEMA contractor person wound up and replacing us at the Coast Guard area.

Then we moved to a church area for just a couple of days. Then Bella Luna catering in the warehouse district, where I live, has a facility that just passed the grading standard by the FDA. So, Horst Pfeifer, who owns it, contacted me through a mutual friend and said, we can provide food. Are you going to do this effort? I said I will be glad to.

And at the same time we were contacted by Aaron Brousard, who is Parish President of Jefferson Parish, and he said we need food, and it kind of snowballed.

And at the point, Vijay Singh, had contacted me and said he was amazed at what was going on. He sent me a check to \$40,000. PGA TOUR sent a check for \$50,000. So we were gaining momentum to extend what we were trying to accomplish at the time that it was essential that people were getting tired of eating MRE's.

We were delivering water. Adidas sent me probably, I would say a thousand shirts. Massimo clothing sent eight pallets of clothing.

We set up our central delivery zone, was based out of the foundry in the warehouse district, and we continued that probably close to two months.

Then we kind of slowed it down. As a result of that effort, we started getting some media attention which at this point right now we're still in the fund-raising mode, and I was just trying too fast forward this, get passed this week.

It's such an unusual week for me for a lot of different reasons. Then we are going to meet with the City leaders and department heads and determine how we can help these first responders, who did such a bang-up job for our City; help them get restabilized in

the City of New Orleans, whether it be scholarship funding, gift card programs, or help them with their housing needs or just provide hospitality venues for them at events. You know, something where they can be thanked appropriately across the board instead of just the usual things. That's kind of where we are today.

Just a short note backing up. Our fund-raising efforts had been basically a Pay Pal account on our web site, feedtherelief.org.

And out of the blue, the week before the Masters, I'm going through the mail, and we are still having trouble with our mail system, and I received a PGA TOUR mail which we get quite a bit of mail from the PGA TOUR. This one was stamped like March 1st and I received it on March 31st. It probably had been rerouted a few times. I opened it up and there was a check for \$83,000 from Phil Mickelson, that he had donated last fall. I think there was a tournament they could do a matching program. You probably know more about that than I did. That one kind of knocked me off my socks.

At the time, I was going for my first time ever to Augusta to receive the Charles Bartlett Award, which is probably one of the highlights of my career.

So, it was neat to be a part of this unfortunate situation. I'm pretty proud of the effort -- it wasn't just me, it was lot of people. My wife, obviously, Cary Sowers, a lot of the people locally, the police officers helped us. Just in that whole thing I saw things that I'll never see again.

I saw them rescue an 80-year old woman that had been in the water for, I think, close to 7 days. She had an autistic, either brother or uncle, I couldn't tell. Alameda County Swift water rescue team had pulled her out. Her grandson was on the ground kissing the ground.

I was carrying a knife because of the animals running everywhere.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go into some questions here.

Q. How many days was she in the water, the grandmother?

KELLY GIBSON: I think in the Lakeview area I saw these guys, this would have been on day 7. And this young man, they were launching their team out of Veteran's Highway. If you are familiar with the area, right into Lakeview, sort of like by Lakeview South, and I happen to walk up on that scene, and they were coming back out, and they were giving them the thumbs up, that she was still alive.

Q. Kelly, give us some context for somebody like myself who just got here, and seeing everything, it looks pretty bad, how much has it improved from eight months ago?

KELLY GIBSON: It's been tremendous. I'm really proud of the people in New Orleans that kind of held it together. There has been a lot of adversity with the media as far as national attention goes, and whether we are recovering. I think we are doing a fantastic job. It's going to be a long, long battle.

If you look at downtown, the City has really come back to life with a different spirit. The hotels are operating. Convention business is now starting to come back on line. The Jazz Fest is going to be this weekend. The Zurich Classic, a big, big undertaking.

Really the bottom line is if you think of it this way, the people who are volunteering to do this tournament, some of them lost their house, yet they're spending their down time, instead of worrying about their house and their life, volunteering to raise

money for children's charity. It's a tremendous statement for what this tournament, why we are here today.

It's impacted people across the board in the City of New Orleans. There is some local guys here that lost some things. If they didn't, a family member did, or a friend, or they lost the golf course that they usually play at.

So those things are going to come back on line. It's just going to be small victories every week before we can start getting momentum.

But I sit here today to tell you that honestly this is going to be the coolest place to live in the world the next 5 to 10 years. It's going to be nothing -- once we get passed this initial stuff, providing we don't get hit again, there will be nothing but positive stories going forward. Our school systems are going to be better. Our infrastructure is going to be stronger. Our government will be better. There is a lot of lessons that we've learned as a City and as a community out of this disaster.

So, I think, positively speaking, it's very good. There is obviously some negative stuff out there. I think it's been well documented. I don't think the positive stuff has been documented very good to be honest with you.

I've travelled a couple of times outside the City. I ran into a few players at Augusta. And I actually played last week in Georgia on the Nationwide, and guys are wanting to know if there is still water on the streets. Those are guys that live in California.

Q. Kelly, how has this put your career in perspective for you?

KELLY GIBSON: Well, my career, obviously, didn't turn out quite -- not that I want to say it's over with, but I think really the only thing that's really been bad about my career is that I didn't win on the TOUR.

I won at every level I played at except for out here. So that's tough, really it is. It's tough sitting up here and talking about it. I've had my chances.

To be honest with you, a lot of opportunities have come my way as a result of the storm. I had a lot of major companies contact me about being a person on the ground for them.

So, I fully intend to explore that and see if that's something that I can walk into and have that as a back up plan. I will be 42 next week. And, you know, I used to be one of the longest hitters out here. I'm not anymore. I can tell you that. Hal Sutton told me a long time ago, he said, you are going to get a lot straighter, but you're not going to get longer.

My career has been what it is. I don't dodge it. I embrace it. I wish it would have been better victory-wise. But a guy from Algiers who grew up playing in Bayou Berry (phonetic), if you know that golf course, my parents are from the 9th ward. I'm pretty proud of what I was able to accomplish.

So career-wise I think -- I don't want to walk away from the game, but yet I know my game is not where it used to be to compete day in and day out on any level.

The Nationwide Tour is extremely difficult. It's hard to explain. Physically speaking, I still hit the ball extremely well. Better than most guys out here, to be honest with you. But I've never have gotten over the hump with my wedges and my short game.

My putting, I could have won 10 years ago, I like telling this story, I really should have, if you go look at the videotape, won the Las Vegas Invitational. It was unfortunate

on a couple breaks. I hit it in the water on the 16th hole. I 3-putted 17 from like by 20 feet. It was a tough second putt. But I delivered Tiger Woods to the world. He wound up winning that tournament. I tell the PGA TOUR, guys like Tim back there, I say I have a part history in this game now because I altered the course of the game, by, if he wouldn't have won that tournament, who knows?

But, you know, Brian, my career is what it is. There is no way for me to hide behind it. It's an individual sport. You tee it up, your name is on your bag, and your name is on the leaderboard. And at the end of the day, what you shoot is what you shoot. You can't blame it on anybody else but yourself. Even though I will try to put some blame on my caddy occasionally.

If it was a team sport, I could have hit underneath the radar until I got things right, but you really can't. You have to compete at an extremely high level in all areas of the game now. The athletes are better. They are stronger, they are taller. The equipment has provided an advantage to a more athletic person now.

So, I don't know, going for it, I don't know. If I got some confidence back, I think that would help me to understand it a little better. But it's been tough.

Q. Kelly, what's the best thing about this tournament being played this week?

KELLY GIBSON: I think the spirit of the people that organize it. They could have said no. I think the TOUR stepping forward and supporting, unwavering support for this community, and the history that we provided to the TOUR.

We have been an annual event since 1958. I think our first event was in the early 30's. We have had Sam Snead to Walter Hagan, Bobby Jones played here.

We've got a tremendous amount of history here. I know it's a competitive schedule, and players have a lot of options on where to play and when to play. But I think the FORE!KIDS FOUNDATION has been under recognized as a charitable group here in New Orleans. They annually give a million dollars a year to children's charities, and without that support a lot of these charities would be in danger today.

I think the spirit of those people as a group, 150, 160 people that are involved with it, this is a big undertaking to put an event like this on. Positioning people, getting the trucks in place, getting the golf course. Dennis McGrill is in the back of the room, his staff, in conjunction with Matt Young, their new superintendent, and the support that we got from the rest of the communities outside of Louisiana, when you talk to these guys, they know you can only do so many media stories.

But the superintendent has really rallied behind this. They were sending out four-man crews, two-man crews. Every asset that the TPC of Louisiana, which I had help in designing, and it's difficult for me to even talk about that place, because of the damage that was there, they sent all of their equipment, and their staff over here to make sure that we put the best possible venue on the planet for this week, and the golf course is in phenomenal shape considering where we were six months ago.

It is really going to play fast. I don't know what the weather forecast is for the next few days. I heard some rain, maybe.

But the difficulty for me, I putt like 9 on the stemp all year long. I'm out there yesterday my first putt went 8 feet by for like 15 feet. I'm like, wait a minute. I'm not quite there yet. I've got two days to get ready.

The golf course, the spirit of the people, the commitment from the TOUR, and then the players, it's like I won a Major or something. I've been stopped 80 times in the locker room, guys saying, great job, we have been following you on the Golf Channel, follow some of the stories that they had you on in the sporting magazines.

And, obviously, the coverage that I got from Augusta has put me in a different light. This is the first time I ever had a scheduled press conference in my career.

To be honest, last week I started getting phone calls from national media who wanted to do stories this week related to this, and unusual experience for a guy that has never won a tournament, but it's something that everybody is trying to tell me to enjoy and take advantage of and get a good word out.

Q. Kelly, you talked early about the positive images, how important is this week? It seemed like more than the tournament, to get that image out that New Orleans is coming back?

KELLY GIBSON: If I can be an ambassador for the City of New Orleans, I think we really have a tremendous amount of good stuff here. I could choose to live in Phoenix and further my golf career, or Houston, or Orlando where there is 80 golfers.

I chose to stay here because I love what the City represents. I mean historically, our significance is unparalleled in the U.S.. Culturally we offer more as a City than some of the major cities in the United States. Culturally, we represent a lot of things that are positive about Europe, about the United States, I think that.

And then spiritually, it's a special place. My first trip to Augusta was this past Masters and someone was joking around, what would you compare it to? I said New Orleans, a very unique place. You either love it here or you don't.

I think what you will find, the positive images, the people who live here generationally, have lived here, don't want to live anywhere else, despite what we went through with the levy system, and all of the second guessing by national politicians and people from outside our state; maybe quite don't understand that because they haven't visited us in a positive light.

They may have come down for a Super Bowl or a sporting event, or for a Jazz Fest or for a weekend excursion to the French quarter. It's something. It's really a neat place to live.

I put less than 2000 miles a year on my car, because I walk. I live in a downtown area, and I walk to everything.

So tremendous friends, tremendous positive stories, I don't know if I answered your question, the positives, it's a rebirth process now for a historic city.

I think a lot of eyes are going to be on us, not only nationally, but world-wide to see how we recover from this event.

To be honest with you, if a Category 5 hit Miami or Tampa or Houston, there is nobody in this room, or anywhere else that can tell me that things would be different.

I was a part of it. I saw how it melted not only from afar, but once I got back into the City, we were one of the first people to feed the mayor's office. And their communication system was gone. To explain that so somebody, in the aftermath of the storm, the only communication they had in downtown New Orleans was basically from me to Joan, and it was in the dark, and there was a lot of bad things that are happening. People were desperate.

But the positive stuff now going forward, we are in a rebuilding mode, the levies are going to be fixed to a certain level. New buildings are going to start popping up. New school systems. All of the things that maybe were marginal in the past are going to be improved on. The things that we're good at, hospitality-wise, are going to be protected and preserved.

Q. Where did you practice?

KELLY GIBSON: I represent English Turn officially. Their logo is on my bag until this week. I had put Feed The Relief on my bag this week because I'm doing a charitable tent outside. We are hosting a corporate tent, just outside the pro shop, where I've invited 400 first responders a day, and we're going to be feeding them between 11 and 1:00. And that was the people who saved 50,000 lives; whether it was the sheriff's department, EMS, police, doctors.

So I play and practice at English Turn, although I haven't been doing a lot of that lately. Obviously my involvement in the TPC of Louisiana was a very cool experience working with Mr. Pete Dye and the PGA TOUR design team.

So I practiced out there a little bit more because I could hide. I could go the back of the range, and I could practice for four or five hours without helping somebody with their golf swing, and concentrate what I needed to focus on. So I split time between those two courses.

I do try to get around. I played Audubon Park, which is a neat property here in downtown New Orleans, kind of in the Garden District, I played there twice in the last few months. City Park is not back to open. I try to get around a little bit. I played New Orleans Country Club. I played Metarie shortly after the storm. A tremendous story there, they really got hit pretty hard. All of those facilities, City Park is still in a little bit of trouble. I think going forward once again that will be a tremendous part of the story. My hope is that, if I can transition, getting back to Brian's question, out of a career of playing 36 weeks a year, to be involved in my community, be an ambassador for the sport of golf. But not only that, be an ambassador for the City of New Orleans because I have so much history in my family, I love the things about here, that I would like to be a part of City Park's rebirth. I've played Bethpage, and I have played Torrey Pines, and I played Brown Hill Park (phonetic).

If I could be a part of some mayor's commission, or a state commission, to bring that to a new standard to let people benefit in the years to come, I would love to be involved in something like that. And I would passionately be involved. To be a part of something like that, would be neat golf-wise.

I enjoy my experience at TPC, and we are going to be opening that back up on September 1st. I split between English Turn and TPC which will be open September.

Q. This was your home course before the TPC was built though?

KELLY GIBSON: Yes, this is my home course before that since 1991, I think. Is that right, Dennis? 1991, I've been on contract with English Turn to represent them on the PGA TOUR, which is neat, because Jack Nicklaus, one of my heros, and my first ever professional golf experience, I was on my father's shoulders. My dad was a 4 handicap at Bayou Berry (phonetic), and he played with a group with of guys which was called the PIGS, which was Plumbing Industry Golfing Society. My dad had the local franchise for

American Standard, and he had me on his shoulders, and I watched Jack Nicklaus go head-to-head with Miller Barber in 1973, and I just thought at the time that was the coolest thing in the world.

I was a huge Pete Maravich fan, and Archie Manning, every kid in New Orleans wanted to be Archie Manning, and then I see this guy Jack Nicklaus, I said this will be pretty neat. I will start trying this out. I wound up being a natural at it. Things progressed. The cool thing about my experience in playing is that I got to play with Jack and Tom Watson. I'm Davis Love's age, so I would transition between the old guys and got to see the new generation come on. I was right in the middle. And I got to see Jack at Augusta which was always cool. He was very nice. My first time I ever got to play with him was at the Memorial, his tournament. I've played with him a few times since.

But I know Dennis is in the back of the room. English Turn has been great to me over the years. It's a neat relationship. I know most of the members here. Transitioning over to TPC was difficult because you feel like you are betraying somebody. But the reality, it was an opportunity for me to do something different in my career, and I didn't want to pass it by and not take advantage of it.

Q. Kelly, can you ballpark what you have been able to raise and give back from a dollar standpoint?

KELLY GIBSON: We have been able to raise right at about \$500,000. And we probably have about \$200,000 currently ready to move shortly after this event. I'm struggling physically, because we are worn out. My wife and I really need a vacation. We are going to sit down after this, and it's not my intention -- I don't really know. I have a board. The 501(c)(3) regulations say you have to have a board. It's up to a decision that has to be made as a group how we help. I'm new to this game. I'm a member of the Fore!kids Foundation. I'm a member of the Oregon (phonetic) Trail Commission. I try to get involved as much as I can in the community.

But to take this leadership role, and there is still a lot of things I'm learning, that process. To be honest to you, the food is not kind of the thing right now. Everybody is able to stabilize. That ended very quickly.

If we can take the assets that we have been able to raise, monetarily we still have some clothing that's coming in. Hopefully, I can get some positive media attention this week to say that as a group the first responders were taken care of after 9/11, I think, as a group they should be taken care of after this disaster because in my personal opinion, they didn't get enough positive stuff out about their efforts. They saved a lot of lives. They pulled a lot of people off of roofs. They pulled a lot of people out of the water. And while they were doing this, and for example, the Coast Guard, 80 percent of the command center in Bucktown, 80 percent of them lost everything they own, and not a single one of them left their position. They reported to work the next morning. So that's a positive.

If I can be a part of -- the money that we raise, if a guy gets in a temporary home and his child needs books for school, and we can provide him with a \$500 gift card to go to wherever, Home Depot or something like that, or Walgreen's, or CVS pharmacy, something to give back to make their life a little bit easier, then I feel like we accomplished what we intend to do.

I don't see myself doing this outside of the City of New Orleans. It's not like where we want to make this a national effort chasing storms, or disasters. I don't know if that helps with the question.

I've enjoyed it. It's been difficult. It's harder than playing golf. I will tell that you, and golf is pretty hard. It's a lot of unknowns. We have been dealing with them as they come.

So I don't really know where it's taking us, but we will figure that out shortly.

One of the things that someone approached me about was doing a fund raiser, golf tournament. Dennis and I talked about it. When I think through these things it's that locals are pretty much tapped.

We didn't go after that. Then I talked to a producer friend of mine that's in the entertainment industry. He wanted to help facilitate doing a big concert for those folks and let them have the first 50 rows, and then bring in some big artists and kind of do that thing. The problem with that, once again, if we did it locally, can we really sell tickets? Then he started to look at venues outside the state of Louisiana. Then we lose the essence of what we are really trying for do is show these people that we appreciate what you did in the most difficult hours of our history here in the City.

So I don't know if that's going to happen. So we really don't know what our next step is.

I will tell you this, that I fully intend to share the \$83,000 check that Mickelson sent with the FORE!KIDS FOUNDATION, and part of that is our tent and our partnership with them going forward.

I'm a huge believer in the FORE!KIDS FOUNDATION, for obvious reasons, they gave me a sponsor exemption to this tournament the last few years. No, I'm just kidding. I have been on that committee for 10 years now. It's a great organization, a lot of hardworking people. It's pretty neat to be a part of it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Kelly, for your time.

KELLY GIBSON: Thank you very much. Hopefully, I will see you all Sunday evening. That would be a shocker, wouldn't it?
