

Jamie Farr Owens Corning Classic Presented by Kroger
Highland Meadows County Club
Sylvania, Ohio

July 15, 2006

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE MIXDORF

MIKE MIXDORF: When it rises, I can't control anything on the backside of it. So water will eventually go over the tee, and we can't do anything with it. There is nowhere to pump it. I'm not sure where we stand with it right now. There's been talk of playing from the 4 ladies tee on the fourth round. I think there is a lot of conversation going on before I came up here. So I'm not sure what the answer is.

Q. How much of a concern is that? Is that the main spot? Are there other spots on the course flooded, and are you waiting for the river to crest, or what have you, in that main area of the course that will affect play?

MIKE MIXDORF: It won't affect play if they go up to play the red tee. They will have an issue with 2. They will have to run players down there and turn around and run them back up. There will be a bit of log jam there, but I just don't know the answer, as to what the answer is on how they are going to handle it.

Q. Are you surprised that everybody came together and you were able to get this course in the fabulous condition it's in with all this water?

MIKE MIXDORF: Surprised, yes. Especially on a Friday night, when you call guys at 9 o'clock on a Friday night and they get up and drop what they are doing with their families and bring in equipment and everything, it's pretty amazing.

I would say that we had probably 15 to 20 volunteers that just rolled in the door anywhere from 8 o'clock to 10:30, 11 o'clock last night and worked with us until 3 o'clock this morning. So we are really proud of everything that happened and the effort that was given.

Q. All right. Mark, great job.

MIKE MIXDORF: Thanks.

DANA GROSS-RHODE: Mark, go over everything. Maybe you can explain kind of just what's been going on the past 24 hours; what you did and the efforts.

MIKE MIXDORF: Thanks, Dana. Yeah, it's been a superhuman effort, to say the least. We have a staff of about 20 people, outstanding staff, who just stepped up to the plate.

Conversations, as we were trying to decide what we were going to do to try to get golf in today with the LPGA yesterday, ranged anywhere from forget it, it's not going to happen, to, you know, if we could tee off at 5 o'clock, and things like that, and they just said, give us the time that we can get to the media and let people know what you think you can do, and I had said, I think we can be ready at 11 a.m. I went out and talked to my staff, got them rallied together and said, let's be heroes, and I think that they did that.

Q. Mark, can you give an estimate of the total number of people in this effort and what it took? Like, how many? Give us a numerical estimate.

MARK MIXDORF: Okay. I own one pump. Last night we had seven 2-inch trash pumps delivered from a company that is a sponsor of the Tournament. They also brought two 3-inch trash pumps.

The area that maybe you saw, or didn't, between 5 tee and 18 fairway was a huge lake, and now it's all gone. You can't even see it today, and that's true due to the efforts of the equipment that was brought in to pump it down.

Basically we sat two 3-inch trash pumps there for six hours and they ran nonstop, and then we received equipment from golf courses in the area: Sylvania Country Club, Toledo Country Club, Inverness. Guys just stepped up to the plate.

When they were called, it was either equipment or bodies or whatever it took, and I would say that we have a staff of about 22, and then I was trying to count bodies last night. I think we were probably 40 to 45 people, so we probably had 20 to 25 volunteers that came out at one point or another. The head golf pro Fred Meyers and his assistant stuck around until 12 o'clock. It was a total team effort on the part of Highland Meadows staff and local area superintendents.

Q. When did you guys get back here in morning?

MIKE MIXDORF: Well, we locked the door at 3 o'clock. I went home, got cleaned up, because I promised Steve Anderson at Inverness that I would have his squeegees back to him before 5:30 when he started, so I had to drop them off to him. So I went home and got cleaned up and didn't really go to bed.

So I got over to Inverness, dropped off his stuff so they could get their course ready for their members, came back here, and it was time to start assessing, because we were doing everything in the dark, and the LPGA and all of us were getting together in the morning. So I had to get here, and the sun was coming up and starting to assess the golf course with light, to give them some sense of whether we would be ready to go at 11 o'clock or not.

Q. Did you have other golf course superintendents here?

MIKE MIXDORF: Yes.

Q. Can you name them?

MIKE MIXDORF: Sure. Steve Brown from Sylvania Country Club and his assistant. I don't know his name. They also brought a few of their staff members as well. Tim Glorioso (phn.) from Toledo Country Club, his assistant Mike Holafield (phn.) They also had another staff member here that I never had a chance to get his name, and Mike Suchoma, I believe, from

Tecumseh Country Club, who fortunately just lives down Erie Street here. So he rolled in here.

God, I don't want to forget anybody. Steve Anderson from Inverness wasn't here but offered up whatever I needed: pumps, squeegees, he offered bodies, but we were pretty much good to go at that time. I had phone calls from people just out of the blue, people I don't even know. I know what's going on; can we come out and help? It was pretty amazing. Felt really good.

Q. Not only did you have to work all night and make an assessment in the morning, but you had the time crunch to work with, to try to get things going before that No. 3 tee box was no longer even an island. Can you talk about that aspect, the race with time?

MIKE MIXDORF: Yes, it was a little bit of a race for time. I know there was a big push because the second round had already started, that they had to get that done, and it wasn't going to happen if 3 tee went underwater because it wouldn't be playing from the same tee.

To be honest with you, there really wasn't anything that I could do especially for that tee. That area just sits in a floodplain. Everything back flows from Tournament 1 and just comes over there in between Tournament 10 green and Tournament 3 tee, and there is nowhere to pump it, because if you pump it into the creek, all it's going to do is flow back around again. So knock on wood. Mother Nature did shine on us in that aspect in that the 3rd tee did not go underwater.

We did have a little wager on when that tee went underwater. My assistant said 2:30, and I took over, and I won. I'm pretty happy.

Q. What was the biggest trouble spot you were concerned about? I would guess No. 9. The fairway is low-lying and took a lot of water yesterday. The only other thing, you can go target golf and avoid certain areas, like No. 2 or whatever, but what was the one, like we have got to get this; it's going to be a real challenge?

MIKE MIXDORF: Well, the challenge really is -- fortunately for me, my assistant Dave Alexander has been here 30 years and has done a lot of work out here. He's put in a lot of drain tile.

The thing you have to do when you are dealing with lakes everywhere is, you got to figure out, okay, I've got to pump this down because everything feeds through there. So everything is going to go to Tournament 15 fairway. So 15 fairway backs up, 7 fairway backs up, 17 fairway. So we got to get over to 15 and get that down so that that clears those drains so that 7 can start clearing into there and then 8, and so Wednesday night, Tournament 17 in front of the green was a lake. So we pumped it across my service road in front of 18 tee, made a huge lake there, pumped it from there over to a huge lake between 18 and 5, and then last night we were able to get rid of that big lake. So it's just stuff like that. Just pumping from one area to another and then moving it from there to another, and that's why you are here until 3 o'clock in the morning.

Q. You are relocating water as much as anything, right, because there is nowhere to pump it?

MIKE MIXDORF: Yes. I mean, our goal is that we have got to get inside the ropes playable for the players. So we will pump it into, unfortunately for spectators, areas where they are walking. Unfortunately, spectators today are probably walking through a lot of soggy areas, but that clears inside the ropes.

Again, you got to know where drains are, where you can take water from a bunker. If that drain's available, you pump it into a drain and get it out, and that's the key, but in essence, you'll pump it into the trees or whatever, you know, like right of 15. We just had two trash pumps sitting there for three hours just pumping water into the woods right of 15. So that's just kind of the way it goes.

Q. You had to do a lot of improvising, I'm sure, to get all this done. What was the most unusual improvisation you had to pull off to make something work?

MIKE MIXDORF: That's a good question. Seemed like there were a lot of them. I'm trying to think what would be a good one. I think we had to do some finagling on some parts. Pumps that had pieces that shouldn't go together, we had to bring in and find another piece and get it so that a stretch of hose would get us to where we needed to go.

We had a bunch of discharge hoses on these trash pumps, but maybe we needed to go an extra hundred feet. So we had to finagle that tool to fit a round peg in a square hole, in layman's terms. So I don't know if that's a good example or not, but there were a lot of things we were fighting.

Q. You talk about the bridge that's being built and what you did all morning, or since 11 a.m., getting players around.

MIKE MIXDORF: Really.

Q. I know that wasn't you so much as the LPGA, but at least talk about the bridges.

MIKE MIXDORF: I just learned about the bridge because I finally got some sleep today, so they apparently are erecting a bridge while I was taking a nap, but I don't know much about it other than Judd was able to get I believe Lathrup to come out and take a look at it, and I believe they are the ones that are erecting it. Judd would be a better person to talk to about how that's being taken care of. I did see that it was being built, but I don't know much more about it than that, Dave.

Q. How many years is this for you now here?

MIKE MIXDORF: This will be my 6th Jamie Farr.

Q. And last?

MIKE MIXDORF: Absolutely not. These are challenges. Work is no fun without challenges.

Do I like 8 inches of rain in two weeks? No, but I think what it does is, it shows what a great staff we have, who just steps up to the plate and answered the call to get the job done. So any superintendent, if you talk to anybody else around me, we are all a little bit scared of the weather that we are being told is coming our way.

As you see, today it's 90 degrees and tomorrow I'm seeing 95, and standing water on turf at 95 degrees, we can start

losing grass. So not only for the Tournament, we are here

saving Highland Meadows from potential damage from fungus and things like that as well.

DANA GROSS-RHODE: How much sleep did you get last night?

MIKE MIXDORF: Last night? None.

DANA GROSS-RHODE: How long was your nap?

MIKE MIXDORF: I think I got a two-and-a-half hour nap today.

Q. Did you get a measure on the amount of rainfall just yesterday?

MIKE MIXDORF: Yes. Yesterday was 2 inches in -- I don't know, what did it rain? An hour, hour and a half. Two hours.

Q. You got, on June 21, three and a half, four whatever it was.

MIKE MIXDORF: Five. We had five inches.

Q. You guys were closed for a little over two days.

MIKE MIXDORF: Yep.

Q. This time, you didn't get as much rain, but I presume there was as much water out here as then.

MIKE MIXDORF: That's correct.

Q. To have golf being played at a 11 o'clock the next day, are you as proud of this as anything you've done professionally?

MIKE MIXDORF: Yes, I would say professionally, probably the biggest challenge that I've ever faced. It's not just me, though. It's a great staff. I can't run nine pumps on my own. I can't push 20 squeegees around. It's guys answering the call, but, yeah, definitely a challenge and not that it's over. You look back on it and you are proud of it and kind of exciting actually. We were out here with smiles on our faces at 1 o'clock in the morning, you know, because we knew that we were doing a good job and we were going to be successful and we were taking pride in our work.

Q. When you said 11 a.m. when they asked you yesterday, were you just pulling a number out of the air? Did you really believe that?

MIKE MIXDORF: Honestly, no, I didn't think they would be playing at 11, but you guys needed to hear something, I guess. That was the number we picked.

The plan was going to be, you know, come in and assess the golf course at 10 o'clock. I was going to tell the LPGA, can we go at 11. If we don't do that, then it was going to be at 11, can we go at 12, and then it was just going to move back incrementally every hour. My number in my head was if we could play golf by 1 or 2 o'clock, I was going to be very happy, as I watched it rain yesterday.

DANA GROSS-RHODE: Any other questions? Mark, thanks so much for coming in.