

**Zurich Classic of New Orleans  
English Turn Golf Course  
New Orleans, LA  
April 27, 2006**

**First-round tournament quotes:**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH RETIEF GOOSEN**

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Retief, for joining us for a few minutes in the media center at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. A great start to the week. You had a little hiccup on 17, but all in all it was a good day out there. Talk about your round and the conditions out there this afternoon and we will go into questions.

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yes, I don't know if conditions were actually better this afternoon than this morning. It was good out there. It was swirly, the wind, funny enough.

The golf course, the wind was coming in all sorts of directions. It was nice to get a good round in after a two week break.

I never played any golf when I was in London. I went to the range a couple of times, that was about it.

It felt pretty good out there, hit it solid, made a lot of putts. Two bad bogeys, 4 and 17. 4 at 80 yards in I made 5.

17, I probably hit the best shot I hit all day and it went over the back of the green, and I couldn't get it up and down.

Overall, I'm happy with the round, one shot off the lead hopefully, get a good round in tomorrow and see what happens on the weekend.

Q. Kind of rare when you see 20 or 30 guys at 6- and 5-under. There seems like that is a ton right there. No one at a 63, or an outrageous score. It suggests that there is low scoring out there, but not deep, deep low, any thoughts on why that might be?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I feel the greens are quite tricky at places. They are getting quite crusty. I hit a few putts today that were bouncing a little bit off line. I think that's why it is just not that low a score coming in.

I probably had my chance for a 63 today. Like I say, 80 yards in on four, you are thinking birdie. 17, I hit a bit at the flag and couldn't believe it went over the back of the bunker. I hit a good bunker shot and misread the putt coming back. Overall, I'm very happy with the round.

I think the course played very well out there despite all of the rain yesterday. Some of the greens are firming up quite a bit. And some fairways as well. So I think by tomorrow afternoon the courses will play back to its normal firmness.

Q. Were you a little apprehensive about the two week layoff, you had a birdie, birdie, birdie to start?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yes, that will get your confidence going a little bit. My swing felt pretty good yesterday. And Tuesday, when I hit a few balls on Tuesday. Yesterday I didn't hit any balls. I played nine holes. It felt okay.

I got off to a nice start today a 3-wood, and sand iron and made a good birdie and that sort of set it up a little bit.

I like to look at the course as well in a practice round. I felt like I can do well around here.

Q. Have you played here before?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No.

Q. Why are you smiling? Do you wish you would have played before?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No, I've never been here. Obviously, they've been through a lot around here, but it's great to be here and support the event, and hopefully we can raise some money this week for charity.

Q. Would you have played this week, Stuart said The Hillbilly Open, some other tournament or somewhere else?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No, actually this tournament was in my schedule from the end of last year. It just seemed to work out my schedule that I was going to play it this time. I wasn't planning on playing it. There wasn't a different decision that I was going to do after the hurricane. But just something to work out of my schedule. This week and next week events, I've never played before, and I would like to play. Maybe there is a schedule change next year. I might have to come and play these events.

If the schedule works out that way again, so at least I played this area or played the courses.

Q. Have you had a chance to look around the City?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I haven't had a chance yet. Hopefully tomorrow afternoon. I am playing early tomorrow. Hopefully, I can finish around 3, somebody can take me for a quick drive.

Q. Have you been here for a visit?

RETIEF GOOSEN: First time in this area.

Q. First impressions?

RETIEF GOOSEN: The food is great. I've been eating a lot, which is good. No, I've been enjoying myself. Just haven't had much of a chance to go and see everything. But hopefully on the weekend I will have a bit more time.

Q. Retief, when you never played a course before, you don't necessarily come and play several rounds before, do you scout it out, talk to players about what the course is like, how do you find out about it before coming in?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I was told this is a good course. Probably the players like this course more than the other one they've played. But I haven't played the other one, so I can't say. But, yes, arriving on Tuesday morning, I sort of liked the looks of it. I felt like I liked the tricky greens with the big breaks on it.

I prefer these greens that have big breaks and big flat greens. So I get quite comfortable to play here this week and do well.

Q. Did you talk to Ernie with it because he's played well here a lot of times?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I was at Ernie's house last Saturday having a barbecue but he never really talked about the course, no. I think we were talking about too many other things, you know.

Q. It always rains in London, how do you have so many barbecues?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Saturday happened to be the best day in five months. The sun was out, like today, not quite as warm, but we were outside. Sunday he was going to play golf, and I flew out, when I left it was hosing down. I'm sure he had a nice round of golf.

Q. What is your favorite food here so far?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, you know, a few times we had the grits now, some of the sauces and stuff. I grew up eating this kind of stuff in South Africa, so it was nothing new to me. There is a lot of spice in the food here. It's nice. It's not kind of like Indian food where it kills you. It's herbs stuff.

Q. You were on a fast track or trying to catch up to get your game squared away for TPC and The Masters, and got it in good shape. Are you set now for the rest of the year in terms of keeping it where it is, maintenance?

RETIEF GOOSEN: It wasn't easy in London the last two weeks, I didn't play. Like I said I went to the range 3 times. The weather has been bad and cold. I'm playing this week and next week and taking another two week break and going back to South Africa. Somewhere in between the holiday time. Then I'm coming back and sort of gearing up for the U.S. Open, playing Memorial, Barclays and the U.S. Open.

Q. What that was a big break that you took starting in the start of the year?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yes, it took me a while to get back on track, but I work hard before Doral, from the week of Doral. I was working hard til up to Augusta, I played a lot. So I started playing really well at TPC. Augusta was disappointing. I felt like I should have been up there a little bit more coming down the stretch.

But I sort of feel like my game is still there now. It was nice to get a good round in today. Hopefully we can be up there on Sunday and give ourselves a chance to win.

THE MODERATOR: Would you like him to go through his round, Doug?

Q. That will be fine.

RETIEF GOOSEN: 3-wood, sand iron to about ten feet.

Par-5, I drive a 3-iron just over the back and chipped down to a couple of feet.

3, I had a 5-iron to about five feet. Then I told you about 4.

Q. You told us the yardage, were you in the rough and missed the green from 80 yards?

RETIEF GOOSEN: No, I hit it perfectly down the fairway, just 80 yards from the fairway. Just hit it 6 yards too long and it went in the back fringe and I knocked it eight feet passed and missed the putt coming back.

9, I hit a 2-iron and a wedge to probably 15 feet.

What else did I birdie?

11, I hit a driver, 2-iron, 30 feet, 2-putt.

13, I hit a 4-iron off the tee and a sand iron to about 15 feet.

Q. Did you think about driving there at all off that tee?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Probably today was the only -- the wind is not really helping, you can't get there. I just didn't feel the need to hit it out there.

Q. Better a 4 shot?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yes.

Q. Sorry, keep going?

RETIEF GOOSEN: 15, I drive a 6-iron, 30 feet, 2-putt.

Q. You put that right on, you just came up a little short?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Yes, it just broke left at the last minute.

16, I hit a driver, sand iron to probably 15 feet or so and made it.

17, I told you.

Q. We know all about 17. What did you hit on 17?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I hit a 5-iron.

Q. What kind of lie did you have in the trap, was it good?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I didn't have much green to work with. It wasn't easy. I couldn't leave it short. I had a good shot. It rolled probably five feet past. I misread the putt coming back, made a good putt.

Q. What did you do on 6, the par-5?

RETIEF GOOSEN: I drove it in the rough on the right, dropped it out, hit it to about five feet and missed. Easy.

Q. A lot of guys have described benign conditions today, did you sense that to?

RETIEF GOOSEN: Well, when I woke up this morning about 6 with jet lag, it looked quite windy. Maybe it was windier this morning than it was this afternoon. But it's a difficult wind around the this course. It's a cross, and you are never sure if it's helping you or hurting you. If you hit the wrong shots with these greens, that are so tiny and lying at angles. It's not easy to get it close.

So forecast is good for tomorrow. I need to get a good round in and see what happens on the weekend.

