

Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial
Colonial Country Club
Ft. Worth, Tx

May 21, 2008

Pre-round Interviews

AN INTERVIEW WITH RORY SABBATINI

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Rory Sabbatini, defending champion of the Colonial back. Obviously a long day last year on Sunday with all of the rain delays and the layoff and so forth.

You got the year off to a good start with a couple of Top-5's in Hawaii and the Buick Invitational. A Top-30 last week, or two weeks ago, THE PLAYERS Championship.

Just kind of assess the state of your game as you are heading into this week

RORY SABBATINI: Obviously I'm playing really well, you know. I finished 5-over at PLAYERS averaging, I think, like 1-putt below, two putts per green regulation.

You know that doesn't exactly do you a whole lot of good.

It shows that my ball striking is there. We are doing some work to make sure I'm getting focussed on the right things and just get the things done I need to get at on the golf course to get the ball in the hole. We've doing some work on that.

DOUG MILNE: Have you had a chance to see the course here and what your assessment of the course is?

RORY SABBATINI: Obviously, I haven't played it this week. But, you know, I play quite a bit of golf out here. The beauty about Colonial, it's a constant. Regardless of what the conditions are, you know, the golf course always plays very similar. So because of that I'm very comfortable with it.

I think Colonial is a wonderful golf course. They just got a great membership here. It's a great place to be associated with. So I enjoy being out here. Obviously, I'm looking forward to my opportunity defend my title this week.

DOUG MILNE: A few questions?

Q. You talk about Colonial playing consistent, experience always seems to be a big thing around here, how important do you feel like that? You have to kind of have the patience to deal with what it gives you, and then to have been around here a few times before maybe you win at this track?

RORY SABBATINI: Well, you know, the beauty about Colonial, it's a traditional golf course. It's a fairly straight golf course. Everything is out there in front of you which makes it, I think, almost a little tougher. It becomes harder to pick out your targets out there on your drives. The greens are, for the most part, small. You know, you got to be very precise with your iron shots.

You know, the course is 7,000 yards, it doesn't quite play to that, obviously, depending on the weather conditions.

But even though the course doesn't play as long as other courses on TOUR, it's definitely one that it's almost like the harder and faster it gets, the tougher this course gets; even though it's shorter. There is definitely a lot of really key understandings that you have to about have about the golf course. Having that knowledge and understanding definitely benefits you.

Q. Rory, obviously last year when you came here you were on a tremendous run and you kind of road that momentum right through this tournament.

Talk about the difference this year in your game. Obviously, you are defending champion, you're not playing quite as well as you were last year, talk about the difference in those two.

RORY SABBATINI: Actually, fundamentally enough this year, I'm actually playing a lot better than I was last year. Last year, even though the scores showed one thing, I wasn't very happy with my game. I wasn't very happy with the state of it. Even when I won at Colonial here I struggled.

You know, when I finished second at Augusta, I struggled.

But that's how golf is. You can have your days where you go out there and you play really well and you shoot even par.

You can have days where you don't actually play very well and you shoot 4 or 5-under easily.

So it's been a frustrating year for me. I feel like I'm hitting the ball better than I ever have in my career. I'm not scoring as well as I would like.

A little bit of that can be associated with the West Coast. I played well, got sick with the flu. It took a lot out of me. By the end of the West Coast I was so drained of energy, basically I let a couple of areas creep in my game. You start practicing bad habits, just not being as focused as you need to be out there, and all of a sudden those become habits that are kind of engrained.

So I had to take a step back and regress out of those and go back to what I was doing.

You know, golf is a game of confidence. You have a couple of weeks where you are not feeling well, the putts stop dropping, and all of a sudden you start thinking about that. You start overanalyzing and over trying.

So I'm really just trying to take it easy this week, and I am just going to go out there and just focus on hitting the golf ball and putting it in the hole.

Q. Do you feel like the familiarity here will help you get the putter going a little bit knowing these greens better than maybe some other stops?

RORY SABBATINI: Definitely. Colonial greens are some of the toughest

greens to play on TOUR. There is no really significant slopes out there. Everything on these greens is subtle.

So, I think, in that sense, if you ask most golfers they will probably agree with me when I say that subtle greens are extremely hard to read because there is nothing there to significantly define what a putt is going to do. That's always been one of the beauties about Colonial.

Q. As far as you talk about getting your strength back, are you back to feeling the way you want to feel, and doing the things you want to do now?

RORY SABBATINI: Definitely. Actually, we've made a lot of progress when it comes to my physical fitness, and I'm feeling really good. The thing is I've actually gone through a little adjustment period because we've done a lot of strength training, and I have added some yardage to my ball striking, so I had to kind of adjust to that.

You know, I'm having a lot of fun on the golf course. I really am. I can honestly say I have never hit the ball as good as I've been hitting it for the last two or three months. It's been a lot of fun, a lot of enjoyment in that. It's just a matter of all of the things coming together and just kind of letting it happen.

DOUG MILNE: Are we good? Thank you for your time. Best of luck this week.

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