

**Nissan Open  
Riviera Country Club  
Pacific Palisades, CA  
February 20, 2005**

**Second-round quotes**

### **AN INTERVIEW WITH MARK RUSSELL**

**(PGA RULES OFFICIAL)**

DAVE LANCER: We have tournament director Mark Russell here. Mark, we'll turn it over to you..

MARK RUSSELL: Sunny Southern California.

Yes, Matt Morton and his staff are unbelievable. They've done a great job. They've done everything we asked them to do here. It's almost impossible odds at times, but the golf course is at what he calls filled capacity. So if we get any rain at all, standing water on the greens, and the bunkers have held up, they did a great job getting ready to go.

So we're just going to wait and see a little while what happens with this weather, and we're going to make every effort to play.

We are going to comeback in the morning, and try to finish the third round and see how it goes from there. But the forecast isn't very good.

But the way the regulations are written we need to make every effort to play and that's what we'll do.

Q. What if we can't play tomorrow?

MARK RUSSELL: If you can't play tomorrow we will make a decision at that time and see what the situation is.

Q. What are your options?

MARK RUSSELL: Options concerning? I mean we can revert back to 36 holes if we needed to. We have a tie there, I believe, so we probably will have to have some type of playoff. Hopefully, we won't have to do that. Hopefully, we can come out tomorrow and play golf. I mean yesterday, the forecast was for it to continue to rain all day long. It was a beautiful afternoon yesterday. We couldn't play golf because the bunkers were trashed and it took Matt and his crew about six hours to get them where they were playable under rules of the game. That's what you deal with with these weather forecasts.

There is nobody that I heard in Southern California say, well, Saturday afternoon is going to be a beautiful day, but it was. So we will take a look at it in the morning.

We are going to try to play some more golf this afternoon. There is no way we can finish the third round even if we didn't have this delay we had right now. We are probably going to try to play some more golf this afternoon if possible and make a decision on that within the hour.

Then we are going to come back in the morning and be in a position at 7:30 and try to finish this third round and go from there.

Q. Mark, unless I was reading it wrong, if you don't start this round tomorrow, you can't go into Tuesday, is that correct?

MARK RUSSELL: That's right. We wouldn't start the fourth round unless we felt we could finish. We wouldn't start the fourth round on Monday just to try to get half the field in so we had to play on Tuesday; we wouldn't do that. We will just have to make a decision in the morning what we're going to try to do tomorrow.

Q. And if you can't finish the third round tomorrow, you can't go into Tuesday either, can you?

MARK RUSSELL: No, no. It would be a situation where if half the field finishes the final round, the round must stand.

Q. That's my question, is on the third round, if you can't finish the third round tomorrow?

MARK RUSSELL: You know, I don't want to get into a lot of scenarios here. But what if the final round is the third round.

Q. What do you mean?

MARK RUSSELL: The round must be completed.

Q. Whenever?

MARK RUSSELL: Yes, we would not go beyond Tuesday. That would be a decision for the commissioner, I don't think that's ever happened before.

Q. I was looking at your regs, it seems to indicate that you couldn't go into Tuesday unless you were in the final round?

MARK RUSSELL: You wouldn't start the final round on Monday for just the reason to get half the field in so you'd have to play Tuesday.

Q. My question is, if you are in the third round going into tomorrow, and you can't finish it, it seemed like the regulation was clear that you couldn't play on Tuesday?

MARK RUSSELL: Well, if half the field got finished and we got in a situation, that round must stand. If half the field finishes the final round, and enough golf has been played that that round will stand.

You know, guys, we are getting into waters here that I can never remember us being in, can you, David?

DAVE LANCER: No, that's a long time.

MARK RUSSELL: I can't tell you in my 26 years, maybe once or twice that we have been -- sat on Sunday morning without 36 holes played. So we are just going to try to play all the golf we can.

Like I say, we are going to come back in the morning and try to play.

Q. So playing Tuesday is a possibility, Mark?

MARK RUSSELL: It could be, yes.

Q. And the best case scenario is 54 holes?

MARK RUSSELL: Right now we are going try to play 72 holes, but that window is closing fast. We aren't going to make a decision on anything until the morning.

Q. You could comeback later today like Pebble Beach a couple of years ago?

MARK RUSSELL: No, we would not do that. You got to understand the Pebble Beach situation, you had nothing unless everybody has played all three golf courses at Pebble Beach. That's one round. So one round at Pebble Beach would equal three days. We are in a situation up there where we didn't have that. We got things now we can rely on such as the 36-hole completion. Something the regulation is covering.

What we were trying to do at Pebble Beach is get purse to the players. The only way you can do that is to play 54 holes.

So, no, we would not come back at a later date and do this. We have things that we could fall back on, the 36-hole completion. And, you know, award the prize money and it wouldn't be an official win, but it would be official money.

Q. Full purse?

MARK RUSSELL: Yes, full purse.

Q. You are in a tough situation, if half the field does finish -- (Inaudible)?

MARK RUSSELL: I hadn't really thought about the tournament next week. I'm concerned about the LA Nissan Open right now. That's what we are trying to do with regulations of the PGA TOUR. It's been tough. It's unbelievable the rain we had. It's kind of like something happening in New Orleans or Hattiesburg (phn) or in the springtime in the southeast.

Q. We are a little unclear with what you said if half the field finishes, the round must stand? If half the third round finishes --

MARK RUSSELL: If that became the final round. That's why it's written final round, it's not written one, two, three or four. If you declare that the final round, and half the field finishes, that round must stand.

Q. How do you finish it if you have to abandon it?

MARK RUSSELL: How would you finish it?

Q. If half the field hasn't finished, what about them?

MARK RUSSELL: You revert back to where you were before you started that round.

Q. So it doesn't stand?

MARK RUSSELL: If half the field -- if we are playing golf today.

Q. Tomorrow?

MARK RUSSELL: Let's say we are playing today, and this is the final round on Sunday, and we got up, we had 70 players make the cut, and 35 players finished, and we got a giant thunderstorm move in, we've got to finish that round if it rained us out Monday, and we had to finish it Tuesday.

Q. What if it rains Tuesday?

MARK RUSSELL: If it rains Tuesday we never had that situation. That would be something the commissioner would get involved in.

Q. Could you revert back to Round 2 and say that's the final round? Can you do that?

MARK RUSSELL: That round would have to stand. We have never been in that territory before. But it's written that if half the players finish in the final round, the round must stand.

Q. Mark, given the dire forecast for tomorrow, we've heard up to three inches in the next 24 hours, given that, how much was the forecast a consideration in even sending the guys out to start the third round?

MARK RUSSELL: Well, we have to make every effort to play. Like I say, we listen to weather forecasts, and we look at things. But at the same time -- how many times, when we got here on Monday, there was a monsoon predicted for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Todd, did that happen? A, yes, B, no. It did not happen. So we have to come out here and try. We can't just blow it off and they miss the forecast and it be nice. We are going to make every effort to try to play. And if we can't, we can't.

Q. At what point is the commissioner consulted in this process?

MARK RUSSELL: The commissioner knows. He knows what's going on right now. I haven't talked to him. I talked to Henry Hughes a couple of times. I mean our staff running the golf tournament, he has confidence in us. We are just in a difficult situation right here. We are going to try to play tomorrow. Hold on one second.

Q. Just given weather difficulties last few years, have there been any thought in moving the date of this tournament?

MARK RUSSELL: Well, if that has been considered they haven't discussed it with me. This is the West Coast swing. I know it's the rainy time of the year here in sunny Southern California, but that's what we have. I don't know. David, have you ever heard of anything?

DAVE LANCER: No.

MARK RUSSELL: When you start talking about changing dates, it affects a lot of things. I never heard of them doing that.

**Q. Mark, this is an off-the-wall question, I asked Dave and probably only a Canadian writer would ask it, if you have to stop at 36 holes, and the tournament then isn't official, then does Mike Weir come back next year trying to come back trying to win three consecutive years in a row?**

MARK RUSSELL: *David*, what do you think?

(Laughter).

MARK RUSSELL: Once again, we have gotten into to uncharted territory here. I would say no.

DAVE LANCER: I think the theory is if someone walks away from here with the trophy he is the official winner, whether it's called an official victory or not that streak would end. Some one else has got the trophy and the first place check.

MARK RUSSELL: Yes, that's right.

**Q. This came up earlier, if it's 36 holes and if it's unofficial, why do you have to have a winner if it doesn't count any way?**

MARK RUSSELL: Well, the money would be official.

**Q. Split it?**

MARK RUSSELL: If it was a player that, you know, wasn't in the Top-125, or wasn't an exempt player, that amount of money could make him exempt. It wouldn't be an official victory, but it can make a player exempt.

**Q. They just call it ties on the European Tour?**

MARK RUSSELL: Yes.

**Q. Mark, after the experience yesterday where you called the round and obviously the sun came out, and we had a good amount of sun in the afternoon, would it be fair to say that you'll take this to as long as possible tomorrow before you make the call?**

MARK RUSSELL: No, I mean what happened yesterday, that's a perfect example of what I'm talking about. We waited until the last possible second to call it yesterday. I mean once we set down with Todd and his staff -- I'm sorry, Matt Morton and his staff, he said, look, it's going to take me six, seven hours to get these bunkers ready. They had to go in there with shovels with everyone of them with a crew and shovel sand.

So once we reached a point where there was no way we could finish, that's when we decided to call it for the day.

I think the golf Gods sit up there and the moment they find out that we called play for the day they make the sun come out. That's what it looked like yesterday. No matter what the situation was, the fairways -- the greens were fine after about an hour of draining. But the bunkers, we could not play golf under the rules.

**Q. Just so I can clarify, you said it took six hours to get the course set up, you called it at 10, actually there could be some golf late in the day if everyone would sit around for another six hours, right?**

MARK RUSSELL: Yes, under ideal conditions, that weren't forecast.

**Q. If it's not possible to get in the third round tomorrow for whatever reason, and you revert to the 36-hole standing, how do you then arrange a playoff between the two co-leaders?**

MARK RUSSELL: Well, we would have to figure out some place we could go and have a playoff. Hopefully, we could get a little break, maybe a par-3 hole. Hopefully 18. We would have to see what the situation is then.

**Q. In '97, I think they played three rounds at La Costa, you have had tremendous rainstorms, and you had Lehman and Tiger tied and they went out for a par-3 playoff. Was that for three rounds and is that a decision that we had to have a winner?**

MARK RUSSELL: I remember that happening. I wasn't at that golf tournament. I don't know if it was three rounds. It was a Sunday afternoon. I think it rained out Sunday and they were going to play that hole several times the way I understand. But it ended on they only had to play it once.

**Q. Mark, given the saturation, and the bad forecast, is there any consideration given to sending, once the rain stops this afternoon, sending the two co-leaders out for a playoff this afternoon and get it done today and making life easier for everybody?**

MARK RUSSELL: No, no, there is no consideration. We are committed to try to play all of the golf we possibly can and, you know, we try to turn around in that third round and get them back out there. The weather cooperated most of the day when, you know, everyone was saying we were going to have rain. We needed five hours to get that second round finished. We got that. We were hoping it would cooperate some more, and we hope it cooperates some more tomorrow. We will see. We are going to come in and try.

**Q. Mark, if you can't get the third round in tomorrow, at what decision does the revert come, the decision to revert back to the 36 holes? Do you wait until Tuesday to do that? I'm unclear on the time frame.**

MARK RUSSELL: If we come in tomorrow and we can't play golf we would make some decisions at that time.

**Q. This probably is not the best question for you or for Dave, but what happens since tomorrow is a Holiday, in theory, people can still come out and see this thing, tickets, parking and all of that stuff, in terms of accommodations for the fans that would be willing to brave the weather to see how this thing ends?**

MARK RUSSELL: I can't answer specifics on that but I'm sure junior chamber would honor whatever needed to be honored to take care of those folks.

**Q. Mark, is it true, I think you kind of answered this, it's true that never during this process did you factor in La Costa or Tucson?**

MARK RUSSELL: No, we are not thinking about that. We are concentrating on this golf tournament. I'm going to be the tournament director down there next week. I haven't even thought about it. I'm trying to do everything we can do, you know, to get this golf tournament completed under our regulations. We will deal with that when we go down there. It's ashame that these tournaments are in seven day increment and when you run passed that, passed that week, you know, you infringe on another tournament's seven days. But that's the nature of the business. Every tournament out there realizes that, you know, we play golf. This is weather related and weather influenced and that can happen.

DAVE LANCER: Thank you very much, Mark. Thank you.

- - -