

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

First-round tournament quotes:

AN INTERVIEW WITH STUART APPLEBY

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Stuart, for joining us for a few minutes in the media center at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. A great start the to the week.

STUART APPLEBY: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: You started where you ended last week, right there at the top of the leaderboard.

STUART APPLEBY: Yes, I extended. I felt like I played well today. I didn't hit too many poor shots. It certainly didn't cost me. There was plenty of birdie opportunities to be had. The course was pretty vulnerable, the soft greens, soft and slowish greens. Certainly soft fairways, left the ball from really getting out of control. So certainly targeting the flag was a lot more easy. Scores were low. Part of the guys are 4-under or better. So I think everybody is thinking 5-under or better per day is going to be a competitive number.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Stuart, you have had a pretty good run obviously, is it a point where you just say to yourself how long can this go, or just keep going with it and ride it out?

STUART APPLEBY: You know how long it goes when you feel like it's going? That's pretty much the way it goes. You know when your honeymoon is over. I think everybody. You can look at this section here. You can look at it for a year. You can look at it through a career, where was my momentum? You can magnify it or draw it out.

Right now, yes, it's about extending good play and extending a feeling. You know, the roll of the dice a bit. Really you can get on roll.

So, I will be doing the same thing tomorrow, just be relaxed. My game feels good and take everything in my stride.

Q. Stuart, when you are in a zone like you are right now, what does it feel like; can you describe it for us? If you are a baseball player, the ball looks like a pumpkin or something?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, the hole doesn't look like a bucket. It still looks like it is 4 and a quarter inches, as big as it always does for me. Well, it's as big as it gets, I think. At times it gets very small. I think you are pretty relaxed. You're not asleep relaxed. You are attuned with what you need to do. You're thinking, well, you're making good decisions, you make yourself look good through hitting bad shots in good spots.

So you just do everything. You are very rebellious if anything doesn't go your way, you're not too concerned, you're about moving on.

Q. You're 7-under, did you leave any shots out there?

STUART APPLEBY: Everyone left shots out there. No matter what round, a 10-under guy would have left shots out there.

Q. Can you tell us what you might have left out there?

A. I left a couple of putts a half inch short, but I made some nice putts. I really think that when you have rounds like mine, it was a nice round, but I was only a shot or two here or there from being in the middle of the pack. That's the sort of stuff you need when you got that zone or momentum.

Q. Did you have any long par savers?

STUART APPLEBY: No.

Q. All pretty short?

STUART APPLEBY: Yes. Nothing super long and nothing, no real big recovery.

Q. About as good as you can expect?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, the course was playing easy today. If you're playing well and it's playing easy, then you got to shoot under par easily.

I can play decent tomorrow and shoot 2- or 3-under go, wow, how did I do five shots better than I did yesterday?

The course is benign conditions for us this afternoon. I don't know what was happening in the morning. Scores are to be had out there. You can see there are dozens of guys -- there is plenty of guys that shot 4- or 5-under today I think could have easily missed four or five shots.

So you just got to go out and do well tomorrow, 7- or 8-under or better.

I've had a good round, but I need to have more good rounds in this tournament to keep me at the top of the pack.

Q. Do you see any difference in this course today versus when you played it in the past?

STUART APPLEBY: A big difference. I've seen this course play very difficult windy, dry, bouncy, fast.

There is just not the punishment right now because the greens are still recovering from a pretty traumatic season late last year, and I guess recovering from the early part of this year.

Fairways are very soft, so the ball is not bouncing around. You play this course firm with the way these greens are, you can easily hit decent shots that aren't going to put you in spots where you have birdie chances.

Like I said, benign conditions, vulnerable golf course, 5-under is a normal score around here if you want to stay anywhere near the top.

Q. Do you usually play Houston, New Orleans?

STUART APPLEBY: In and out of both. There is no consistent.

Q. Was there a feeling to play here this year because of the circumstances?

STUART APPLEBY: Yes, I think so. I don't know how many players.

Q. You personally?

STUART APPLEBY: Yes, yes.

Q. What was your best birdie hole?

STUART APPLEBY: I didn't have a best, no. I just made a lot of good -- no big putts, no chip-ins.

Q. Any worse birdies?

STUART APPLEBY: I put one in the left center of one hole there and didn't get away from it.

Q. Are you anxious at all when the ball is in-flight on 15, the par-5?

STUART APPLEBY: I was disappointed with the effort that I made, with the pass at that ball. Was I anxious? I was anxious as I got today, yes. That was me panicking, yes. And I was sort of fortunate to hold the trap. But then at the end I made up for it, got lucky a little bit there and made a 4. I think I birdied all of the par-5s, so that helps you get squared away.

Q. Lucky to find a bunker, were you sitting up nice?

STUART APPLEBY: No, it was a very difficult shot. But, you know, I was fortunate. I was actually swinging at it. One yard left and it's in the splash in there with the 3-eyed fish.

Q. What is Stuart Appleby like when he is panicking, what would you say to that ball?

STUART APPLEBY: I don't remember myself panicking. I can remember being severely pissed off. But that thought runs through my mind more than panic. I don't think I've every felt a sense of panic.

I wonder many times why I play this game and can I play at a high level, weird game.

Q. Is the 3-eye fish an Aussie thing?

STUART APPLEBY: No, that water doesn't look like it should be drunk by an animal. Have you seen the Simpson's episode where Mr. Burns has the nuclear power plant, and the fish comes out of the lake and it's got three eyes, that's what it looks like out of that stuff. Only carp can live in there or nutrien.

I sort of remember this course. I missed the green on one, got up and down, got off to a par which was a nice start.

2, par-5, knocked it on, 2-putt from probably 35, 40 feet.

Par-3, 2-putted from about 30 feet.

Next one, 4, I made about a 12-footer there for birdie.

5, I made about a 4-footer for birdie.

6, I made a birdie from about 12 feet down the hill.

7, I left it right in the heart, hanging over the edge for par, for a birdie, but made par.

8, 2-putted from about 25 feet.

9, 2-putted from 15.

10, I missed a chance from about 20.

11, made a good one from about 12 feet for birdie.

13, left it short from about 20, 25 feet, hanging on the edge again. I would like to have made a birdie on the short par-4. I drove it down to 40 yards short of the green and made a 4.

Nothing par on the next, 2-putted, long distance.

Par-5, up and down out of the trap from about 12 feet.

What's the next? I should have made one there. I got a lucky bounce but I 2-putted a good 2-putt on 17. Made a 4-footer on 18.

Q. Not being in Houston, what you've done the last few years, was there any part of it that made it a bit of a strong goal to be a multiple winner this year instead of getting a lei around your neck?

STUART APPLEBY: No, no. It's nice to win somewhere else except Hawaii. That's not me complaining, that's just me. I'm not bored with winning in Hawaii, by no means, because it's a privilege to win. I know there is a thousand people who would take my position. It's nice to know that I've now got fuel for my cars. I pick the right tournaments, don't I?

Q. You do?

STUART APPLEBY: Now all I need is someone that sponsors a tournament that builds garages.

Q. Talk about the next step winning a Major, there could be other steps before that, one being multiple wins?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, steps, there is guys that have won Majors that I guess were nowhere near the level of steps that they thought was across the Major line.

So, you know, there is a pretty broad avenue of what level you can be at to win a Major. To be a contender consistently, which I haven't done, I need to play more like what I'm playing like now, what I did last week, and what I did in Hawaii, but the Major courses are different, too.

There may be, you know -- certainly the U.S. Open you have to drive the ball good. If you don't drive the ball good, you have to drive it so far down the fairway, someone like Tiger. He can smash it out, he's so strong. But they are different courses. I need to find my game on a different style course, certainly Kapalua and Houston, and maybe my other victories.

But with the right game, and I have managed to find, not find, but haven't managed to in nurture my game to the right levels in enough Majors to be at that level of contending in Majors. My game is good enough. I haven't been able to find the sweet spot enough weeks.

Q. You are a little too hung up on Majors, I think what I'm looking at is perception a way, how well you are regarded, not only by yourself, by your peers, by the public. When you get a player of strong caliber that's winning, he is a Major champion. They look at someone like you and say, what, he's a PGA TOUR winner, six or seven times. When you can say here is a guy who could win two or three times a year, is that important?

STUART APPLEBY: I don't even know how to answer. I sort of know your question.

Q. I'm glad someone does.

STUART APPLEBY: Look, it's better that I have enough experience, through enough victories, and I use part of that, look, I've won seven or eight times now, I must know what I'm

doing. I've got to this point through experience. I've got to this point through hard work. I'm not sure how to answer it.

I should be using that food as fodder, to say you know what, Stuart Appleby you can play in Majors. I had a 19th at Augusta, but finished ornery on the back 9.

I've got to not make soft bogeys. I think that's an example. Tiger hardly every makes a soft bogey. A soft bogey is where no one is -- you're not going to make a bogey here and all of a sudden you do. That's what I've got to get rid of. If I get rid of that, certainly in Majors, and stop having silly holes, just relax and play golf and treat every Major like a normal tournament. There is a sweet spot that you need to be at emotionally and that's where you play your best. That's what I did last week. None of this B.S. major preparation, go to a new level. Because you should have already found your level, whether it's the Hillbilly Open or whether it's a Major. You need to find that. It needs to be there. You need to be a creature of repetition. That's why Tiger wins a lot all the time.

He talks about Majors, but be honest, he's not out there going, I can afford to leave this one right, I'll still win, don't worry about it. He is pushing himself at any tournament because that gives him the ability to drive it home when he needs it under the gun.

Q. Stuart, where does this stretch of golf rank in your career?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, that's not a stretch, I had one win, that's not a stretch. You are best to ask the question, at the end of the year, what has this year meant out of all of the others that you've had.

I can't answer that, we are right in the middle of the year, well, not quite in the middle of the year. I've won for twice in a year, I have done that. I'm happy and pleased and proud of that. But there is still a lot of golf left for me this year.

Q. How much of a distraction, for lack of a better word is the --

STUART APPLEBY: Is the media? A lot. Don't kick me.

Q. You know last year?

STUART APPLEBY: My wife is amazing, she does most of the hard work. She is amazing. I don't get, hey, you take the kids, I'm going out to get a manicure for 4 hours, and I will see you tonight, I'm going out to a night club. I don't have a wife like that. She is amazing. It's not a distraction, it's a very pleasant one.

I certainly remember feeling when I was in Hawaii for '05, I was about to go home and have No. 1. I remember feeling very scented, and very fortunate, I'm about to go home and have a pretty cool experience. That's part of my victory. I'm lucky at what I do. I thought of that last week a bit too, I thought life is great. I get to play a sport, get paid to do it, and I got a good wife and a family. It calms you down enough and gives you a reality check that you don't have to get psycho out here to try to win tournaments. You just need a perspective on things and find the sweet spot of where your concentration is. I think I found that last week. I have fine kids. I find them unbelievably funny. It's only going to get funny with two little girls. Somewhere, I will probably get a shotgun in a few years when they start dating.

Q. Oh, you will?

STUART APPLEBY: Like that scene in Bad Boys, that will be me at the front door.

THE MODERATOR: Everybody all set?

Q. Did you get a sense of how much the fans appreciated you guys being here today?

STUART APPLEBY: The fans were following Phil. There was a couple around me. The predominant --

Q. When you got to 18?

STUART APPLEBY: Up in the stands, they set there for a while. They certainly knew what was going on. There was definitely more applause for our group on that last 20 minutes of play coming down 17, 18. They were pretty good. They might be bigger and better on the weekend, I imagine.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.
