

**Sony Open in Hawaii  
Waialae Country Club  
Honolulu, HI**

**January 14, 2010**

**First-round quotes**

**INTERVIEW OF TROY MERRITT**

**JOHN BUSH:** We have Troy Merritt with us here in the interview room at the Sony Open in Hawaii after a 5-under par 65. Troy, a great start to the season for you, if we can get some comments on your day.

**TROY MERRITT:** Well, it was obviously my first round as PGA TOUR professional. I was pretty nervous on the first tee. I always have a few nerves on the first tee, but it was a little bit different and my heart was at my throat. I was able to hit one right down the middle of the fairway and able to hit a 7-footer for par coming up the hill. And after that, things kind of settled down a little bit. I hit a lot of good rough shots, and things kind of rolled in, I had a couple of par saves and a couple of nice birdie putts. Then we moved to the back 9, and I hit it pretty flawless for the first 11, 12 holes. The swing got a little bit loose from 13 through 16, and I battled through it and made a couple of key par putts and got away out of that stretch and 1-over. I could have been three or four over easily. I rolled in a nice one on 18 to finish my day.

Q. Talks about that first birdie on No. 3, the first one as a professional on this TOUR, it had to feel pretty good?

**TROY MERRITT:** Yes, I'm not a big fan of hitting hybrid off the tee, but with the wind blowing like it was, I hit a perfect shot 12 feet below the hole and got lucky on my putt. I decided to hit it nice and firm and hit the back edge. It might have popped up a little and went in the hole, otherwise it could have very well been off the green. I was glad to find the bottom of the hole.

Q. So you have been here since Saturday?

**TROY MERRITT:** Yes.

Q. How many times did you play the course?

**TROY MERRITT:** I got in Saturday afternoon, and I just played it the one time on Tuesday morning. This is my second round out there.

Q. What else have you been doing?

**TROY MERRITT:** I took Saturday and Sunday off, and kind of got used to the time change, and then on Monday I played. I just came out and practiced a little bit in the morning, tried to get the swing back in the groove, and take little time. And Tuesday played out here. And yesterday played in the Satellite Pro-Am out at Midpack Country Club. So I've been playing a little bit of golf the last three days just not here.

Q. So between winning everything there was to win in the WAC and now, there was a little bit of a break, what did you have to learn to get to this level?

**TROY MERRITT:** You know, it was, I thought that I had to change a little bit, to compete on the Nationwide Tour and now on the PGA TOUR.

I found out last summer, midway through the summer, I can take what I did in college and apply it to what I'm doing now, and the results ended up being pretty much the same now.

I won in Mexico in September on the Nationwide Tour, and was able to win at Q-School and everything worked out.

Today, it was just kind of keeping my head at one level all day; never getting too up and never getting too down, and just making the best swing possible at each shot.

Q. Did your Coach, Kevin Burton, say don't change, you are trying to do too much?

**TROY MERRITT:** I asked him about more technical stuff. If I think there is something wrong with my golf swing, he is able to help me there. He knows that the best asset of my game is my head, and he knows that that's really never an issue with my game.

It's just that it was something that I had to figure out. I personally thought that I had changed a little bit, and I had to be the one to go back to what I was doing. Nobody ever told me. Nobody ever really knew what was going on inside of my head, and I never really told anybody. So it was my own finding and getting back to what I was doing.

Q. What was going on inside your head?

**TROY MERRITT:** I thought I had to hit perfect shots every time. And growing up, obviously that's what you try to do, but it's impossible to hit a perfect golf shot every time, and I relearned that concept, and I relearned that par is always a good score. It got me the 2 victories, and I played well again today.

Q. When you thought about playing your first round on the PGA TOUR, was this anything like you would imagine?

**TROY MERRITT:** You know my fiancée asked me --

Q. You couldn't have a fiancée, you are only 12, aren't you?  
(Laughter).

**TROY MERRITT:** That's why I don't clean shave. No, she asked me what do you want to accomplish tomorrow on your first round. And I said, I would be ecstatic if I could go out and shoot 3-under-par. I wasn't really thinking about that today, but that's what I told her and things went way better than I thought they could have gone today, and I am very happy with it.

Q. Have you played here before any of the college tournaments?

**TROY MERRITT:** No, twice in Hawaii but at different courses.

Q. Was that at Wikulala (phn)?

**TROY MERRITT:** We played at the Clipper Course and then Turtle Bay, my senior year.

Q. I'm curious from your standpoint, having what you've done at Q-School, there is so much attention, I know you are worried mostly about yourself, but do you find it the least bit odd that there was so much attention on Rickie coming into the season and you guys are in the same group.

**TROY MERRITT:** Not at all, and it doesn't bother me at all. He was the No. 1 amateur in the world a few years back. He definitely deserves the attention that he gets. And I've always enjoyed flying under the radar. With the cameras on him, and everybody asking about him, that's just with me, just go about my business and see what I can do.

Q. Secondly, I was off to the side with a rules official when a woman who was just completely outraged by this, was your name on the leaderboard, go on, you tell the story, I missed the tailend of it.

**TROY MERRITT:** I didn't even know about it. We were walking down the third hole, toward the fairway, and Rickie called up to me and said, hey, Troy. I said, what's that? He said, look at your name. I looked at it and I saw Merrick on it, John Merrick, which I thought it was funny. It didn't anger me at all.

Q. The woman was furious, I got to tell you.

**TROY MERRITT:** That's the ultimate of flying under the radar right there.

Q. What was the strongest part of your game today?

**TROY MERRITT:** Staying level headed. Like we said earlier, making the birdies is obviously really nice, and I poured in about a 35, 40-footer on 5. Those are kind of like surprises, shocks to me when they go in. You just take it for what it is and you don't get too uppity. I'm not a big fan of fist pumping. If I do that, I

lose my focus and I can't find for it a few holes. So I smile, a little wave to the crowd and just keep plugging.

Q. Your last fist pump was when?

**TROY MERRITT:** I think Q-School, I did it one time when I chipped it for birdie during the third round.

Q. And then bogeyed the next 3?

**TROY MERRITT:** Didn't quite bogey. I didn't make any birdies, I don't think the next couple of holes.

Q. How did you do in Hawaii when you played here?

**TROY MERRITT:** My junior year I enjoyed the ocean a little bit too much, so I didn't really compete. I finished midway through the field, somewhere around 50th.

My senior year, I came with the mindset that I wanted to win the tournament. I shot 64 out at the Fazio (phn), was in second. 69 on the Palmer, remained in second by one shot. And then I didn't play well the final round, shot even par and ended up in 12 or 13th place. I'm pretty comfortable on Bermuda greens. I always have been. I never played them growing up, but they're something that I enjoy.

Q. Your Coach tells a story about a college tournament in Santa Barbara, where you were winning pretty handedly, I guess, and he was trying to get you to play safe on 18. He didn't know that you wanted to set the tournament record. Is that the kind of mentality that you take into the pro game as well where you are really keenly aware of records and Rookie-of-the-Year and things like that?

**TROY MERRITT:** I don't think about that, I just try to keep it one day at a time, one round at a time. When I've got it going well, I try to make as many birdies as I can, because you never know if you are going to have a day where birdies are hard to come by. That day specifically I wanted to shoot 199 for the three rounds. Nobody at Boise State had ever done that, and it ended tying the tournament record as well. Coming down the stretch, if it's in hand, a lot of guys kind of get conservative, aim for the fat side of the greens and take their pars. Whereas, yes, I'm up by 5, but can I get three more? Can I win by 8? So that's what happened there.

Q. Wasn't it Watson or Arron Oberholser that had the record?

**TROY MERRITT:** There was some PGA TOUR names.

Q. You had the birdie on No. 5?

**TROY MERRITT:** I'm a big fan of when the breeze is blowing, I like it right-to-left off the tee, so I like to hit a cut. I hit a nice cut right into the breeze down the left side and ended up on an upslope and shot pitching wedge straight up in the air, and it seemed like it was never going to come down, but it came down on the green, had 35, 40 feet, a big slider from left-to-right, and I

started walking it in about 3 feet from the hole, and I never do that, but it was nice to make that one.

Q. It's like a fist pump isn't it?

TROY MERRITT: Yes, I suppose.

JOHN BUSH: No. 9?

**TROY MERRITT:** I hit another real nice drive, kind of rode the wind right down the middle of the fairway. I had a 7-iron in, which is always nice into a par-5, and hit it in about 18 feet below the hole, and decided I had the right line, but just didn't quite hit it hard enough left-to-right on the front lip and tapped in for my birdie.

Q. No. 10?

**TROY MERRITT:** Hit another nice drive, rode the wind down the left side just short of the bunker, short of the green, had about a 30 yard pitch, and pitched it up, landed 20 feet short, checked a little, rolled it up to about 6, 8 inches and tapped that one in as well.

Q. Hole No. 11, par-3?

**TROY MERRITT:** My caddy and I really struggled gaging where the wind was coming from on 11. I had 7-iron out thinking it was a little more downwind. And it switched to coming most just left-to-right, so I put it back in the bag, grabbed a 6, and I hit a nice little draw holding the wind and got in there about six feet and rolled it in the back center.

Q. Only bogey on par-4, 13.

**TROY MERRITT:** My first fairway I missed, I thought I hit it in the bunker down the right, but I was lucky and I carried it. Had a nice little shoot right through the trees. We were playing for it to jump about 15 yards. I hit a nice 9-iron right through the trees right in the middle of the green, landed just past the flag and rolled back to the back fringe and decided to put it, and my putter got caught in the rough behind the fringe there, and it came up about ten feet short and hit a good par put. Just too much break and missed on the high side.

Q. Birdie on the last.

**TROY MERRITT:** I really struggle hitting a draw with my driver. It's something that I have to work really hard to do. I was able to turn it over nice. I thought I hit it really well, but it just barely cleared the bunker, ended up in the rough on the down slope, hanging lie, and we thought that I could maybe nuke a 5-iron, get it running up the fairway and onto the green, it just turned over a little more than I thought. I ended up in the short left bunker, and I had a long bunker shot, which isn't one of the best parts of my game, and I avoided the dreaded quick shot, the hundred yard quick shot, and got it out 20 feet short of the hole, made a nice

read, and had perfect pace and rolled it right in the middle of the hole.

Q. Can you explain doing so well only the second time to play a course?

**TROY MERRITT:** Not really. You take a good look at it in your practice round. If you are hitting good shots, and you've got a good picture for when you do play in the tournament, and if you hit a poor shot, you can either re-tee and hit a good one, or learn from your mistake. I actually played pretty solid here on Tuesday. I had a couple of bogeys and a couple of birdies. A pretty typical practice round. I don't have the best of focus in practice rounds. But you get through, you learn the course a little bit, you learn where not to hit it. You get a good feel for the greens and then when the tournament comes, the focus level increases 10 times of what it is in the practice round, and it obviously worked out today.

Q. You have to remind me Troy what comes with winning school? Are you set through the fall, through the West Coast?

**TROY MERRITT:** I'm pretty well set through Phoenix. I will be close getting into the Northern Trust and Phoenix, but I probably will just been a couple in.

Q. What do you plan on doing?

**TROY MERRITT:** As of right now, I'm planning on playing in all of them except for Mexico. And I would go to Mexico if I don't get off to a very good start and I need to make a little bit more money before the reshuffle, otherwise I will plan on taking that one off.

Q. Where are you living right now?

**TROY MERRITT:** I'm in Phoenix now.

JOHN BUSH: Troy, thanks for coming by.

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