

Zurich Classic of New Orleans
English Turn Golf Course
New Orleans, LA
April 25, 2006

Pre-tournament quotes:

AN INTERVIEW WITH TIM PETROVIC

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Tim, thanks for coming in 2005 champ. Why don't you start us off with some general comments on coming back to New Orleans, defending your title, be it on a different course.

TIM PETROVIC: I'm glad to be back in New Orleans. I'm happy that -- I'm happy to see that we've got Jazz Fest going on. I'm happy to see that Mardi Gras is going on. Some sense of normalcy going on. And, you know, without the City being back, you know, we couldn't even have a golf tournament. So that was our first priority there.

I'm glad to be able to defend, whether it's here or at TPC. I'm looking forward to a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up to questions.

Q. Tim, you were here a month ago, I don't know how much you had a chance to see the City since you've been back this trip, have you had a chance? What's your feeling, what's your reaction to what you see?

TIM PETROVIC: Well, when I was here a month ago I went up to, I think it was Lakeview and saw a little bit of that and drove through. You know, I didn't expect anything great when I drove up there. I guess that's where one of the levies broke. It was sad to see. These neighborhoods of beautiful homes, and nobody in them, and it was a little surreal for me.

This was the first time that I had actually seen it other than what I had seen on TV. I guess, you know, seeing it on TV doesn't really do it Justice. I guess it was just a lot worse in person from the stories that I heard. It was an experience. You feel a little helpless. You feel like I wish I could have done more. I wish I could have done more and got in there and done something. But, you know, it made me really feel for the people of New Orleans. You don't want to see anything like this happen to any city, and hopefully nothing like this will ever happen again. It was a surreal experience driving through there. That's about it.

Q. Tim, have you had a chance to talk to your wife at all, I just left here; she was about knee deep in gutting the house, really getting after it?

TIM PETROVIC: Yes, that was important for her this week. She really wanted to get in there and just do something physical, get in there. Because during the crisis we had helped out, and we had helped some families out down in San Antonio, and got them on their feet action, put people up, bought Wal-Mart cards for a lot of people.

She wanted to get in here and get hands-on. So that was real important for her to come out here today. I guess she was knocking down some walls. She will be a little sore tonight, I guess.

Q. Are you surprised that more guys like -- I know Phil is here and Retief is here -- are you surprised that some of guys aren't here like Vijay and guys like that?

TIM PETROVIC: I guess I'm surprised Vijay is not here. I don't know how many tournaments in a row he's played. Every guy has their own schedule. Obviously this that is a special week for the TOUR. I guess you can't -- every guy can't be here.

But I know you guys are looking at the list and why is this guy not here? Especially the guys in the Top-10, their names kind of stick out.

But the guys that aren't here, they've pitched in and they've really did a lot in the off season. And the TOUR has done a lot. The TOUR is here as a whole, as a group. This is our week to step up and show what we can do.

We're just glad that we're here, and we're hosting the first major sporting event since the hurricane.

Q. Sounds like even if you weren't the defending champion you would have come?

TIM PETROVIC: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. The last time I played here was in '02, my first year, and I didn't come back in '03 and '04. It had nothing to do with the City. I did miss the food. It had nothing to do with the City. It had to do with scheduling. Whether I wanted to play 5 in a row, or it just happen to fall on that week. I was glad I came back last year.

Q. Can you talk about your year so far, Tim?

TIM PETROVIC: Well, it hasn't really been stellar. If you look at the stats, I'm not a big stat guy. But all it takes is one good week out here. I'm kind of playing like I was last year, nothing was happening, I actually skipped Houston the week before last year, went home and tried to regroup.

But I did make a couple of swing changes in the off season. Now, I feel like I'm progressing, I'm going in the right direction. Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better. All of the things that I'm working on, the physical fitness part -- I'm not doing anything, I'm not reinventing the wheel or doing anything crazy with the fitness part, I'm just trying to get myself in better shape. I'm 39 now, I'm not 24. I am just trying to keep my body in better shape.

This year, it's creeping along a little bit. All you need is one good week out here. Every week I feel like I have a chance to win.

Q. What challenges does this course present to you that TPC didn't? I don't want you to trash one course over the other or anything, but every course is different, every course has to be approached different, how about yours?

TIM PETROVIC: I'll be honest with you, I haven't even played the course this year yet, and I haven't played it since '02. So I remember half the holes. But when I step on the tee, I will remember the hole. I remember this course last time I played it, the greens were extremely hard and it was really hard to get the ball close. That probably will not be the case this year.

I know you all haven't had any rain in two months, or a month and a half. So sometimes that doesn't necessarily make the course firmer because they will be watering it to make it green.

But I think the TPC course had its little, its little idiosyncrasies, these little fish hooks, they had in the bunkers. A lot of the guys were complaining about that. They were like pot bunkers. I said, don't hit it in there.

Last year I was fortunate enough to where I missed all of the fish hooks, when I hit it in the fairway bunker I missed the fish hook and I had a shot.

It's like when you go to a course like -- that doesn't make it a bad golf course. That's its thing. You go to St. Andrews you have pot bunkers. You're not getting out of those. Don't hit them in there. Simple. Some of them you can't even see.

The two courses are fairly different. I think the greens here are a little grainier than over there from what I've seen. You might have a little more rough here. I think the length of the course, I know TPC wasn't the longest course. They were actually making some changes over there to shorten some holes, which is something you don't see. They want guys to go for 18 in two.

This course is one of the best finishing holes, I think. There is a potential for a number. We've seen a lot of shots over the years, guys holing out of bunkers. I think Frosty holed out of a bunker here. There is a lot of drama on the hole. I think this course has one of the best finishing holes.

Q. Tim, when you won this tournament last year, how soon after winning, taking all of the pictures and everything, did you think about coming back here the following year, knowing the course as well as you do and maybe taking what you know then to now?

TIM PETROVIC: Yes, it's funny because after I won, I really wasn't lighting it up all year. It's kind of like this year. I realized that I didn't have to hit it my best to win. That was probably one of the first things that I realized. I putted really good that week. A putter can erase a lot of mistakes. I did not hit the ball great. I managed my game well. I kept it in play. I didn't try to play somebody else's game.

But after I won, I was a little tired because I had to drive about 12 hours over to the next tournament.

If I had to do it all again, I don't know if I would skip the next week, I would take a little break. I kind of played five or six in a row thinking that I was playing good. I was. I just kind of wore myself down.

I was looking forward to coming back here. I love New Orleans. And it's funny, because one my friends called me, Robby Krueger called me from The Doors, and he congratulated me, and he said, you know, our last gig was in New Orleans. It was the last concert that they played this year. So I guess that was good for the MoJo last year.

Q. Did you ask them to come back?

TIM PETROVIC: Come back, yes, they are actually trying to get on tour right now. They are trying to get their name back.

Q. I would be curious, Tim, a couple of years ago, you played very well, very steadily all year, either getting into the TOUR Championship, or getting really close to getting in the TOUR Championship. Last year, really one good week, it wasn't a very good year, which one did you find more rewarding, '04 or '05?

TIM PETROVIC: Well, '03 I played really good.

Q. Was it '03?

TIM PETROVIC: Yes, I think it was '03. That was probably my most consistent year. I think I finished like 20th or something in putting. It was probably a really good putting year. I really haven't had a typical Tim Petrovic putting year yet. Putting has always been the best part of my game. I've been around all of the courses now. This is my fifth go-around. I hear guys talk, this is his third year or fourth year, he's due to win. Fortunately I did win last year. I did feeling like I was due.

But at the same time I didn't because I just wasn't playing good. But '03 I was more consistent all around. I think all around I was like 20th something. I thought that was pretty good. We were talking about that the other day.

I'm not really a big stat guy. If you look at putting, 1.71 and 1.73 separate the guys that's 15th and the guy that is 95th or a 100. So you are talking two one-hundredths of a stroke here. I don't know, how does that figure into a whole season? I'm not a huge stat guy.

But '03 was probably my most consistent year. I'm trying to get back to doing everything fairly well this year.

This year everything is really kind of average, below average.

Q. Given your druthers, would you rather have a year like '03 where you have a lot of chances, or a year like last year where you only have one?

TIM PETROVIC: Well, since I won last year, I'd rather have a year where I win once every year. Out here, that's fantastic, if you can win once a year for like 5, 6, 7 years. Over that period of time, I think that would prove some kind of consistency.

Q. Tim, you played here in '02 and missed the cut, you weren't feeling well that particular week or something?

TIM PETROVIC: My two girls, my beautiful girls, God bless them, my 8 month old, she came down with a little, I guess they call it the flu bug, or stomach bug, and we all got it and we passed it around. By Thursday, I had it. Or yesterday night. So that was not fun. I had like two bags of fluid before I teed off, and I made it, but I was barely walking. That was my first year here. So I was like mmm, that wasn't why I didn't come back the next two years.

Q. How does this course suit your game, Tim, do you think?

TIM PETROVIC: I think -- you know, if I'm hitting the ball the way I'm capable of hitting the ball, I think every course suits me. I kind of dot my game every week for the golf course. Some courses are longer than others. They put a premium on driving the ball. This year, I've been really trying to put an emphasis on driving the ball a little bit straighter, which I have. Now it's just a matter of putting the ball in the hole.

But, you know, I like this course fine. It's greens are a decent size. It does put a premium on driving the golf ball. I haven't seen the rough, but I here there is a little bit of rough out here.

Q. Tim, if you look at your chances this week and I guess the field in general, where do you see yourself in the mix? Do you think you've got a shot to defend here?

TIM PETROVIC: Sure, I feel like I have a shot. Every week I tee it up, I'm playing to win. I'm not playing to make cuts. I'm playing to win. Otherwise when I stop feeling like I have a chance to win, I'm probably going to stop playing and that's kind of my attitude and that's the way I go at it every week.

Q. In your opinion, who are some other golfers that could contend and maybe win this thing?

TIM PETROVIC: Well, I mean, Phil obviously, he is probably playing better than anybody right now. He has won his last two tournaments that he played in. And he didn't squeak by them. I think he won Atlanta by a couple of shots, didn't he?

Obviously, he feels comfortable playing Augusta. If you look at the history of this course, I think guys that can really bomb it have done well here. Carlos Franco has won here twice. So, yes, obviously, he'll be there at the end.

Q. Do you know much about Stephen Ames's game and how that would parlay into here?

TIM PETROVIC: Stephen, as you saw from his clinic he put on at The Player's Championship, is a great ball striker and he prides himself on that. He is not short either. It's a good combination to be able to hit it

290 and dead straight down the middle. You saw from TPC, there wasn't any waver or anything coming down the stretch. He was down the middle of every fairway. He was on every green and he was 1-putting or 2-putting. There wasn't any doubt. When he gets in his game, he was kind of in a zone. He could put on that kind of a clinic.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Tim.
