

59TH ANNUAL BANK OF AMERICA COLONIAL
Colonial Country Club
Fort Worth, Texas
May 19, 2005

First-round interviews

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIRK TRIPLETT

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Kirk Triplett after a 4-under bogey-free 66 during the first round of the Bank of America Colonial.

Kirk, you've made 13 of 14 cuts at the Colonial Country Club. It seems like it's a place you enjoy playing.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yes, I think so. It's always fit my eye, my golf game and always been a place that I enjoy just coming away from the golf course as well. I enjoy it down at Fort Worth. The people are very friendly and look forward to it every year.

THE MODERATOR: That lead to your bogey-free round today, talk a little about that.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yes, I got here, I was hurt. I had to withdraw from the Pro-Am. I did not hit a ball until warm-up this morning. So I didn't know what to expect. I tried to play conservative and made a few putts. Made a few key par putts. Stayed away from the bogeys and rolled in a couple of birdie putts and there it is 66.

THE MODERATOR: Take some questions.

Q. What was ailing you?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I hurt my back going to the airport Monday morning, and just putting the suit case in the car, I think. I was very, very stiff and could hardly walk when I got here. I just spent basically the last two days in the fitness trailer down there, and they got me in good enough shape where I could take some swings this morning. Lower back, it's just kind of locked up. All of the muscles spasmed. It's something that happened to a lot of us out here. It's happened to me a couple, three times over my four or five years anyway. You just have to wait a few days for it to let go.

Q. Playing conservatively like that, what is your mindset going out? Does that help around here? It seems Mayfair talked about the same thing that he, or Leaney talked about the same thing going to the center of the green and I guess just taking birdie whenever?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yes, I think if your short game is sharp, you feel like that's an okay way and strategy to go out there and play. So many other courses that we play now, it seems like you just want to go ahead and try to go right at it every single time because they are usually pretty receptive. This course, you start going right at it every time and there is some little nooks and crannies out there that you can't make par from.

Q. Follow up on that, does this course play any differently with the condition that it's in? There is more grass out there?

KIRK TRIPLETT: You know, it didn't seem to have a lot more rough. It seemed to be a little bit more uniform. I think the greens are the best I've ever seen them. That may be one of the reasons for a lot of the good scores. They are a nice speed, they're rolling very true. The course, you can't say enough about it, it's in wonderful shape.

Q. Is there anything to draw from the focus and the approach that you have to take to kind of find your way around when you're not feeling well. You're ailing a little bit, is that something that you can kind of --?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I think there is no question about it. If this wasn't Colonial I might not have gotten on the plane on Monday, you know. Colonial is a place, a tournament that I enjoy, a tournament that I like to come to. I'm going to give it every chance I could to play.

So, yes, there is no question that it played a part in my getting better quickly.

Q. Can you think of events you had where you were feeling lousy coming in and kind of carry yourself through?

KIRK TRIPLETT: The same thing happened to me at the FBR Open about two or three years ago and it happened the Wednesday before the tournament, and I didn't hit a ball for five or six days, and then I played in the Wednesday Pro-Am off-site, and I played very well in the tournament. I think it was in third place going into the last day and played with Vijay, he ended up winning. I might have finished 10th or 12th. I had a very nice week. That's what I was thinking about in my mind. Okay, you got hurt. You got to get over it now, when you come back you will be freer and looser than you have been the last couple of months because that's why you are hurt.

Q. So the moral is you've just been hitting too many balls?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Probably not.

Q. What worked particularly well for you today? All shots felt good out there?

KIRK TRIPLETT: No, I'm still pretty stiff. That way I felt like I couldn't really over swing, so I made a lot of nice, you know, full slower swings and gave the swing time to develop. I hit some bad shots. But I always seem to hit it in the right spot to where I could get it up and down.

I hit a horrible tee shot on my last hole today, but I hit it so far to the left that I had a swing and had a stance and couldn't see the green and got the ball on the green 40 feet away and 2-putted.

So really what I did well today was, I managed my game well and then I made those key putts. You look really smart when you are making those 8 or 10 footers that you have for par. You feel sort of like a big dummy when you miss them.

Q. Kirk, you all talk this course being a shot makers course, work the ball course, would that be an accurate description of your game, would you consider yourself someone that does that well?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I like the challenge of that. I don't think I always take it on. There is sometimes I find myself hitting a shot I am more comfortable with into the hole instead of always shaping it with the hole. I played with a great shot maker today -- two great ones today, Justin Leonard and Jeff Sluman, and they certainly do that on pretty much every shot. I do enjoy trying to work the ball a little bit.

Q. How important is playing this course a lot, or having experience here, how much does it help, I guess in being able to know which spot to put the ball?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, I think it was helpful for me today, I wasn't panicking because I hadn't had any practice or preparation on the course. I still do my lines and figure the way the wind blows. I think over a four day stretch, when the weather changes, that's when the experience comes in, when the north wind blows, or even just a slight switch from the south to the southwest, the course plays different.

Q. Kirk, so often people talk about this course, how it sort neutralizes the ability to just bang it out there, there are so many other areas of the game come into play, do you have any theory as to why a guy like Kenny Perry, other hand the fact he is a good player, he is a guy that hits it out there so far, you think that strength of his might be a little neutralized here, yet he seems to be on the leaderboard every year?

KIRK TRIPLETT: I think those big long hitters, every time they've come here, they've been in contention. When Tiger played here, he played well. Norman played here, he played well. Vijay has probably played reasonably well at some point here. I think it would still be an advantage for a long hitter out there. You can get past some of the course, and past some of the trouble spots, or you can hit 2-irons or 3-irons or 5-woods to a place where I am hitting a driver. Theoretically, you would be more accurate with those clubs than I would with be with my driver. You might not be happy hitting them off of the tee. I think length is still an advantage. It's like that guy standing there on the mound, a guy throwing 85 or a guy throwing 95, the guy throwing 95 is harder to hit. The guy who hits it's long, all he does is wake up in the morning and hits it reasonably, and he is going to have an advantage.

Q. Do you think a wounded veteran golfer has more of an advantage than a rookie guy not feeling good, you got experiences to fall back on?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Well, yes, I wasn't panicking because like I said, I hadn't prepared the way I normally do. This may all go out the window tomorrow. I may feel terrible again. But as for today, I didn't -- I was never -- I have never felt like even this morning hitting balls that, oh my go sh, I'm not ready to play. I can't play. I can't shoot a decent score today. I never had that feeling.

Meanwhile I wasn't feeling great, I didn't feel like I was swinging my best, I felt like I could play a decent round of golf.

THE MODERATOR: I know you are meeting with another child for adoption this afternoon, you might mention that.

KIRK TRIPLETT: For those of you who are unfamiliar with what I do, I represent the Dave Thomas Foundation for adoption. And each week we have a local foster child out to the golf course and give them a tour around and show them and have them talk to the media so we can kind of tell their story and get their story out. Today we are having a young lady named Mariah, she is coming out at 2:30. She is coming out a little bit. If you guys see fit and would like to get some information, we would like you to interview her or me or both of us. That's my 2 bit spiel.

(Scorecard.)

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

- - -