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Second-round Interview

AN INTERVIEW OF ROD PAMPLING

THE MODERATOR: All right. Welcome Rod Pampling after a PGA tour career best of 63. Congratulations. A good day, you got off to a great start today with 3 birdies on the first 3 holes. Let's talk about today's round.
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah, I have been handling the ball really well on the range. And yesterday it was starting to come out really well. And playing again today I just hit a nice 7-iron to about 7 or 8 feet, it was just a nice break. I just had a little read and it was a nice left-to-right putt. And 11, I hit a 3-wood into one of the fairway traps 20 yards short. And hit a sand wedge out to 6-foot there, and made that one. And I hit driver 9-iron into 12, which that was about I think, 2-foot.
THE MODERATOR: A great start.
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah, it was a very nice start. 11 is one of those holes you want to birdie. And obviously with the shot into 10, I just felt happy with the way I was playing, obviously. Three in a row is a good start. It just allows you not to be so aggressive on some of the holes. You can play a little more safer, and sometimes I played a little bit too safe. I was always in the right side to get a chance to get up and down. I didn't make too many mistakes when we missed the green we chipped and putted and kept the momentum going.
ROD PAMPLING:
THE MODERATOR: You picked up your second tour win earlier this year at Bayhill Invitational.
ROD PAMPLING: Hum hum.

THE MODERATOR: Heading into this weekend the pressure to get that second win which seems to be the hardest, after the first, justifying that win is the next hardest thing to do.
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah, the International might help as well though that was my first one, and then Bayhill was second.
THE MODERATOR: Right. That is what I was saying. Getting that second one justifies the first.
ROD PAMPLING: Okay, I've got you. I'm sorry. Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe that takes a little pressure off you coming into this weekend, you have already got two wins under your belt, you have been there before.
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah, definitely. You can look back at two tournaments that you have won now and especially with the Bayhill not that long ago, you still have you the good memories from that. We keep going around. It's a very similar golf course. Bayhill was a lot of rough. Whereas here it's a lot more trees. You have to plot your way around the golf course. Each day, depending on the pins, you will be able to go for some holes, and some you won't be able to go for. There is no one set hole everyday that is a birdie hole. It changes the pin just from the pin position.
THE MODERATOR: We'll open up the questions. Stephen?
Q Rod, just talk a little bit, obviously like we talked about the sand, you got in there and you saved yourself even on the last two holes. Just talk about your confidence there and just how it worked out.
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah, again it was on spots where it was on the correct side of the hole to miss it. That is what allows you to have a relatively simple trap shot. The one on 8 -- on 9, sorry, wasn't that easy. We have all sort of can't believe it went that far that second shot. As long as you are just playing yourself a round, and the chipping and putting has been great last week, and it's carried over this week. Yeah, I feel confident if I miss a green I can get it up and down, and I say, keep the momentum going.

Q Have you played a round before where you started with 3 and ended with 2, and was there any time difference in that? You started birdie, birdie, birdie, so.
ROD PAMPLING: No, that something that just pops into my head straight a way that comes out of the box that well. I have had some great starts. We have been 5 and 6-under through 7 or 8 holes. But not to have the first three in a row as birdies. Sometimes you start with an eagle or something like that.

Q (Inaudible)?
ROD PAMPLING: No, that is a first. Yeah, that is definitely from injury. There are a few guys that have pulled out through 9, but not through injury. You know, it was tense, Jason is a good friend. And you don't want to see anything like that happen. I think he was thinking about going on, but I think we talked him into, you are better off to get it treated before you do any more damage.

Q Do you know what he did? An elbow?
ROD PAMPLING: I don't know. He apparently said he heard something go. That is one of those things that you virtually hear only yourself. For him to buckle up like that, it had to have hurt. He is a fairly big man, I'm sure he is not going to go down pretty easy.

Q You made some pretty good par saves to keep things going. And I wondered do you get more momentum out of your par saves in your round or the birdies you were making? Because you hit some pretty big --
ROD PAMPLING: There were key moments I think for the par putts that were made. On 16 was a big par putt to keep things going, and we made a bomb on the next hole. And all of a sudden instead of a couple under you are back to 4-under again. I think you get your momentum from just making the good putts. Whether it be for birdie or for par, I think it depends on when it happens. The par putt on 16 was a big one to keep things going. And, yeah, as long as I keep making 'em the momentum keeps going.

Q How was the wind, pretty consistent or hard to judge, or how was it?
ROD PAMPLING: It was generally consistent. There was a few times where it may have been a little bit off the left or a little bit off the right. That is the one that was difficult. Well 16 was an example, we were taking it left-to-right and I was aiming just a little bit left of the pin, and so it drifted left. Generally it wasn't too hot and it was a pretty constant breeze, just hot.

Q Have you found it easier to handle the aftermath of winning this time around coming off Bayhill? It looks like you have had some strong weeks and have been able to hold things together, is there a difference?
ROD PAMPLING: It's a learning process. We're always learning constantly. And to have that win was another learning curve again. Just to feel how it was out in the golf course. Just remembering how I controlled myself. And that is what you are trying to regain again. And, you know I felt that today. It was just as easy if I missed a bad shot or if it went to the bunker, it didn't worry me. Let's get this up and down and keep going. That is the thing you learn is how to keep the rounds going.

Q Did you come out with that feeling or did it build as the round went on?
ROD PAMPLING: Yeah it, builds. On 10, I was not looking for a birdie there. And 11, was a great sand save, and it started to build there. And the second shot into 12, that was a nice shot that sort of kept us going. And I just kept calm for the rest of the day then.

Q Looking now you are top 30 in the world rankings and multiple winner, what has happened to your personal expectations?
ROD PAMPLING: Well we have goals at the start of the year, that is to win again, and we have achieved that. I think it's more believing that you belong. And the longer you stay up in the top 30 and win tournaments the more you believe in yourself. And as things keep going on from there. And I think that is where we are at now. Just the confidence is certainly building. And I know now that I belong in that top 30. And just go there and let the game happen and know that your game is a solid game and that it can compete and win on the PGA Tour.

Q Talk a little bit about what 16, meant to you. Run us through that and kind what that was like to keep the momentum there and what you hit in?
ROD PAMPLING: Well I hit an 8-iron and obviously it hit right on the edge of the trap. And then 5 into the left corner of the trap. It wasn't -- that made the shot a hell of a lot more difficult. I hit a good shot out, and it didn't release as far as it should have I thought. Once I got over the putt, it was a nice ball outside left putt. Didn't have to worry about speed. It was a little bit down. It was a nice stroke. It was one of those, as soon as you hit it you pretty much know if you it does the right thing, it's going to go into the hole. It would have been maybe a 10-footer.

Q So what is it like when you get to March of a year and you have already checked off maybe your biggest goal of the year? I mean does the sunshine brighter?
ROD PAMPLING: You re-evaluate. Once you have reached a goal you still have to re-evaluate. We had the goals that we set as well throughout the year for top 10. We reached one. It's a step to let us reach all of our goals at the end of the year. Definitely it's a nice one to get out of the way.

Q At a certain stand point is it more difficult to be at home during the tournament with all of the stuff going on at the house and everything rather than being on the road?
ROD PAMPLING: No. I think it depends on the way you look at it. I have played Colonial quite a few times throughout the year. And I feel comfortable and that is the feeling I bring to the golf course. We try and keep it low-key, because of the reason you can get caught up with too much going on. I say just try and pretend it's another round out here and a nice casual round, and have fun out here. That is what we're trying to do. It's obviously working.
THE MODERATOR: Can you go through the rest of your birdies. The one on 17.
(Scorecard)
THE MODERATOR: Anything's further for Rod?

Q You talked earlier about how sometimes you may be a little conservative in nature. I wonder how do you strike the balance and tending to want to be conservative, and yet obviously you were making a lot of birdies and you guys have to make a lot of birdies out here to win. How do you --
ROD PAMPLING: Conservative as in golf shots. Some of the shots we hit today I was aiming left of the hole and I just did a little draw in. And it was more, you know, on certain holes if you miss it in a wrong spot, it's virtually impossible to get up-and-down. Where others you can be aggressive, and if you miss it you can still get them up-and-down. It's more of the size where you can't get up-and-down unless you make a big putt. You try to keep away from those sorts of pins. There are small greens too. You have to really be exact where you want to hit the shot. That is what myself and the caddie workout. If you have a wedge in your hand you go for a lot more pins. The greens are starting to firm up and the winds are pretty strong. So it's just more of a -- you are working your way around the golf course. You are not trying to be, you know, super aggressive on every single pin out here. Which, you know, you could do. Because you know you haven't got a lot -- you haven't got a lot of long irons in your hand. I think it's being smart and trying to keep the pin high. Most of the time.

Q This was a career best scoring-wise for you. How will you rate this as far as among rounds have you played?
ROD PAMPLING: Ball striking-wise, I don't think it was one of my better rounds. Because obviously as many bunker as I was in. I think it was right up there as in controlling myself and emotions out there. It was just, I didn't get flustered with anything if it was in the bunker, then we just walked up to that shot and thought about that shot, and not swing as much and why hit there? It was more of forget that and get them to the next shot and fix it up.

Q I guess if you win this week they may invite you to play in the 70th or 80th anniversary tournaments. Ben Crenshaw made the cut today at age 54. I was wondering what you thought about that?
ROD PAMPLING: He is playing good. He was playing well at the Masters as well. It's great. It's whenever you see guys -- is he 53 you say? 54. It's great to see guys, that is the beauty of this game, there is someone that is 20 or 54 that can make the cut and still compete. I think it's a good golf course for the older guys to get around. It's not one of those power course that's we play now. It's one that you can work your way around. That is the kind of golf he obviously grew up playing. That is one of the reasons he made the cut.

Q What do you hope you are doing when you are 54?

ROD PAMPLING: Well, you know, you'd like to think you can still play golf and be competing out here. I don't know, I have not thought that far down the road yet. But it's coming close, unfortunately. I still would love to be playing the game. I started late. I still have a lot of fun still. It's great. You know you have so many good friends out here.
Q So you are a young 37.
ROD PAMPLING: Yes. Exactly.

Q You didn't say that with much conviction.
ROD PAMPLING: I still feel like a kid. You obviously you think when you are in your teens your father would say he still felt young. And now I know what he is meaning. You certainly don't feel old at 36 that is for sure.

Q You shouldn't feel old after 63?
ROD PAMPLING: No, I should switch my age around.
THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Rod.
ROD PAMPLING: All right.