

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
August 23, 2019

FRED COUPLES (-7)



Q. Fred, Sunday at Dick's Sporting Goods shoot 63, today 67. You get off to a good start here at Boeing. What have you found in your game?

FRED COUPLES: You know, a few putts going in. I missed a few today, but I made a lot of nice little putts. But just really when I take a lot of time off, I come back and just try and focus on hitting it solid, and then the better I hit it, the more I can narrow it into good shots. And today was a good round. Every time I come up here, I tell everyone I need to play the par 5s better. Up until that minor disaster, I played them 3 under and that's really going to be a huge part of my round.

Q. Well, it seems to be working. Extra motivation this week playing here in your hometown to play well?

FRED COUPLES: Well, this is the ninth year going on this extra motivation. I did go to New York and I played well, but I did go there so I would be a little more prepared and I think it's paid off. I really do like this course; just a lot of times I come up here with so much time off that I shoot 71 or 72 and you can't do that on this tour. You've got to really shoot in the 60s the first day and work your way up there. If you have a hot round Sunday, you have a shot at winning. If you don't, then I want to play well.

Q. You talk about those 71s, 72s, opening rounds here haven't been your best. Was that in the back of your mind to get off to a quick start?

FRED COUPLES: You know, I say it now, but no, because I knew I was playing well, whereas before I would come out after two or three weeks off up here. The fairways give you some width, but it's more a little edgy on driving it, and today I drove it pretty well. I hit one bad drive on the par 5 where I thought I could go for the green in two, but other than that, I kept it in play and putted well.

Q. So you need to shoot a 68 maybe, shoot 65.

FRED COUPLES: Right, 65. Yeah, it was a nice front nine and I made a really, really nice par putt on 10. I hit a good second shot and it spun down the green, which I've never done with that pin before off the front of the green. I made a great up-and-in from really about 30 yards and then birdied four in a row to get it going. You know, the whole time there I knew I had the right club and you can't go -- although Goose got it up and down, but you can't go to the right there. I'd rather a pull hook the 4-iron. But I did birdie three of the four par 5s, so that was a big deal.

Q. And No. 8 from a long ways out.

FRED COUPLES: No. 8, yeah, that was the worst drive I hit all day and hacked it out of this lie. I had a really good yardage. It spun back and I made about a 15-footer for birdie. So those are all fun and games, but some of the good shots I hit were on some of the par 3s, which I'm now figuring that they're probably as a group four of the hardest par 3s that we have on our tour. They're all 5- and 6-irons, and of course 17's about 215, so I hit 4-iron. But I played those 1 under and I'm going to birdie a couple of the shorter holes. And no bogeys. You know, I'm thrilled to death.

Q. Usually you're playing from behind on Saturday here and now you're only one back. How much different is it going to be tonight and tomorrow?

FRED COUPLES: We'll see. I would rather shoot 7 under than 1 under about every day the rest of my life. You know, again, it's just one of those things. I don't play that much, but when I play and get going, I feel like I'm going to do really, really well.

Last week I didn't expect to have a shot at winning. I thought I could go hit the ball. And then when I came here, I played in the Wednesday pro-am with some family members and I played yesterday in a little shootout and I practiced. So I feel like, you know, I'm getting better and that's what you have to do. I mean, 65's a great score. I don't know if I've had many of those here, or one. And I get to play with Fred Funk tomorrow, so that will be very interesting.