

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: BILLY MAYFAIR
August 24, 2016



DAVE SENKO: Billy, thanks for joining us.

BILLY MAYFAIR: Absolutely. Thank you for having me.

DAVE SENKO: You've had a chance to play one event now. Maybe just take a look back at the Senior Open a couple weeks ago, just what your thoughts were on that first start. You came very close to almost winning in your debut.

BILLY MAYFAIR: That would have been nice, there's no doubt. I was thrilled about the way I played, but I mean, it was very emotional for me. I wondered how the first shot, the first round was going to be for me out here. I've waited almost three years to get out here. I've played a lot of the PGA Tour. This is my 29th year. And the last three years I haven't been fully exempt, so I can play wherever I can, a lot of Web.com Tour events.

I kind of wondered how that first tee shot was going to be on No. 10 at Scioto and it was very emotional for me. My wife -- even now, my wife and son were there to watch me hit my first shot, and I got it down the fairway but it was very emotional. I was very excited.

I think the highlight of my whole week was obviously getting to play great on Friday, and then being in the last group on Saturday. But having my pairing with Gene Sauers and Joey Sindelar, the two greatest guys in the world. I was out there Saturday just kind of pinching myself, am I really doing this again, playing with these great guys in such an important event and having fun. I guess that's the biggest thing for me, I just had fun. Obviously, Sunday it got real serious out there and I was proud of myself for not being in contention for a couple years to still hit good golf shots and handle the pressure as well as I did, I was very proud of myself. Obviously I would have loved to have one shot better, I think we all would have, but Gene played great, and I was very happy for him and I was happy for my week, too.

Q. How hard is it those final few years before you turn 50, you know it's coming up, how hard is it to keep focused and not get down?

BILLY MAYFAIR: It's very difficult. You know, obviously I know some guys are coming out here next year who have been fully exempt, they're still playing on the PGA Tour so they didn't have to go my route, but in a way I'm kind of glad I did have to go to the Web.com Tour. I played one year full-time on the Web, I've played the last two years kind of back and forth on it, and it makes me appreciate what is out here. It makes me appreciate what I've done in my career, and then to come out here and be back on that stage with these great guys out here again, it really makes you appreciate what I've done in my career, but it makes you happy to be out here. Sometimes maybe if you just went off the Tour and came right here, maybe you wouldn't feel that way. So I'm very happy to be out here and I'm

going to play out here full time.

Q. What do you think of a guy like Bernhard Langer, at his age still being the guy to beat?

BILLY MAYFAIR: He's amazing, he's amazing. I remember watching him, we played together one year at the PLAYERS Championship and he was the greatest wedge player I ever saw. I always thought Paul Azinger was a great wedge player, but after playing with Bernhard, he's so deadly with his wedges and his short game and his putting, and he stays in great shape.

I won't lie to you, I watched him at the U.S. Open, watched what he did and how he acted. We had some nice conversations on the range and he talked about anchoring the putter, and we both have long putters, and what we did to adjust to it and all that. He's been very gracious to me and obviously someone I look up to and follow his lead.

Q. Billy, I wanted to ask you about just -- obviously John's a big draw and everybody says at different times this tour needs a little different juice. What does he bring that maybe others don't, other than just the long drives, and how much does this tour kind of need him to start playing well to kind of justify the buzz?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Well, there's already a buzz. Everywhere he goes, there's a buzz. Everyone just loves John, they love to watch him hit the ball a long way, but just his personality and the way he conducts himself on the golf course, everybody has fun. He brings a lot of people out to watch and I think it's great.

Listen, everyone here in this field would love to see John play well. We've always been that way. We always want to see John play well. There isn't a guy out here I've ever met who doesn't want to see John play well. I just know he's been through some tough times, like we all have out here, but it's an adjustment out here. Yesterday was my first practice round out here, and riding in the cart and seeing the golf course, it's an adjustment. I think if you give him a little bit of time to adjust. I know he's tired right now, I know he's flown all over the world a little bit, but John will do great out here. He'll bring a lot of great things for this tour and he'll play very well out here.

Q. Is it hard because sometimes it feels like you've got three tours, or in his case three tours, but you can still play the PGA Tour and the Champions Tour, you almost have two homes but not one full-time home; is that hard to kind of balance?

BILLY MAYFAIR: It's funny, my wife and I were talking about going at the First Tee in a few weeks, we go back to Pebble Beach, so we go back to a golf course we played on the big tour. It's hard, you get used to a routine, you get used to playing a certain golf course in certain places and you like certain places. I can tell you my favorite places on the PGA Tour that if I got an invite or I got in next year, I probably would go play them just because I like the tournament and like the atmosphere.

It's just getting used to all new -- like yesterday, I spent almost five hours on the golf course just learning the golf course. 29 years, I've got every yardage book, every pin sheet I've ever had, I keep those and it's like a Bible to me, and I came up here without one, I didn't have anything. I've never been here, I never played a Champions Tour event, so I'm learning each day as we go along, which is fun. Trust me, it's a lot of fun. But like I said, the most fun I have is just seeing everybody on the range and talking to everybody and getting to see everybody again.

Q. Do you have any idea what's on that rig of his? Have you ever toured his bus?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Not the one he has now. I was on the one before and all that stuff. Yeah, and his golf bag would blow your mind. He's got his cooler in there, he's got his Diet Coke in there. John beats to his own drum, but let me tell you, there isn't a player out here who doesn't want to see him do well and we all love him to death and wish nothing about the best for him, absolutely.

Q. If I'm a golf god and I can say you can keep your five PGA Tour wins or you can keep your U.S. Amateur win, which one do you keep?

BILLY MAYFAIR: That's a tough one, that's a tough one. Obviously the PGA Tour wins are huge because, you know, got me something to eat. You can't eat that U.S. Amateur trophy. But if they introduced me on the tee as a U.S. Amateur champion before my first five tour wins, I would be very happy with that. I'm very proud of that win, it's a USGA event and that's one reason why I wanted to win last week. I mean two weeks ago at the USGA. Anytime you can win a USGA event it's a huge thing, but my U.S. Amateur will always be very special to me no matter what happens.

Q. You won Public Links, too, and now that tournament's gone. Does that bother you or do you think they may have a point that, hey, (inaudible.)

BILLY MAYFAIR: Yeah, I think the USGA -- I don't want to sit here and say they did the right thing. I don't know how that four-ball tournament will go. I think it's kind of different, but being a past Public Links champion, you hate to see that championship gone, that's for sure. But if it gives more people the opportunity to play, then I'm in favor of it absolutely. It was hard to see it go and the USGA did a great thing, they sent out to all the Public Links champions and kept us abreast, gave us information what they were planning and what they wanted to do and things we could do, so the USGA was great about that, but we would love to see the championship stay, obviously.

Q. Is Sahalee the only other course you've played in a tournament?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Yes, up here in Washington, yeah. And what's funny about Sahalee, I don't mean -- I won -- the year the PGA was here at Sahalee, I had won the week before at the Buick Open. So if I could have won last week at Scioto, it would have been the same

thing, my next win would have been up here.

Q. I think you brought your mom?

BILLY MAYFAIR: My mom was here with me, yes. She's passed away since then but she was with me and we had a great time up here. She always loved coming up here to the northwest.

Q. You won in Las Vegas one time, right?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Yes. No, no, no, I did not. I finished second there a few times.

Q. Duffy Waldorf was in the final group with you, I was there covering that event and I remember you and Duffy Waldorf --

BILLY MAYFAIR: Jim Furyk and I had a battle to the end, he birdied the last hole. I remember another year I was right there and Bill Glasson beat me on the last hole which got him into the TOUR Championship. Vegas was always fun because it was always the last one before the TOUR Championship so everybody was trying to position themselves in the top 30, top 70, 125. That's kind of gone out the window a little bit with the FedExCup, but it brings back good memories.

Q. Talk a little bit more just about ASU golf. (Inaudible)

BILLY MAYFAIR: Well, we're very happy to have Coach coming down to Arizona State. Like I've said, we text back and forth and I haven't got to meet him yet but everybody that I've talked to from up here and other players and other coaches from other teams have all said very great things about him, that he's a great guy and he'll do a great job down there at ASU.

Nothing against Tim Mickelson, who he replaced, but I think this guy will be more of a coach, a college coach. I don't think Tim was quite that way. Tim decided to go a different route, which I'm happy for him and I wish nothing but the best for him. But I think he's going to bring a lot more -- it was funny, we were in the locker room, Dan Forsman and Tom Purtzer and I and Bob Gilder were all talking about it yesterday and we're all old ASU alums and I think he's going to get us all back involved in the program and get involved and that's what we want to do. We love being involved and helping him out.

DAVE SENKO: Who was your coach, Billy?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Well, actually in four years I had three different coaches. I had George Boutell for a couple years, which we all know because he was a PGA Tour rules official for a while. And then a gentleman named Bill Mann who was the first ASU golf coach who used to do the scoreboards out here, and Steve Loy for a year and a half. So in four years I had three different coaches. Hope it wasn't me. But I got along with every one of them. They

were all different, that's for sure, but George I knew for a very long time and he recruited me. It was fun to play with him for a couple years. George was a lot of fun.

DAVE SENKO: Do you follow Sun Devils football?

BILLY MAYFAIR: Absolutely. Sun Devils everything, baseball, everything, the Olympians and all that stuff. We bleed maroon and gold, just as people up here bleed purple. Like I said, we've got 15, 16 more days until college football? It doesn't get any better than college football.

Q. Nine days.

BILLY MAYFAIR: Even better. Even this Champions Tour stuff is going to get in the way of my football time, but that's okay. And it's something people say what do we talk about on the range? It's what we talk about. We all know where everybody went to school and we all give each other a hard time. We used to give Tiger a horrible time about Stanford. Now all of a sudden now they turned it around and they're really good and all that, now he's not out there as much. But where you go to school, everybody knows where you went to school and we remember that.

Q. But on the LPGA Tour, I mean, it's like more and more of them aren't going to school.

BILLY MAYFAIR: I know.

Q. They're still good, but why are colleges producing good male Tour players and it seems to be other options for the women?

BILLY MAYFAIR: To me, and I don't know -- Missy Farr, who's the woman's ASU coach, and I are real good friends and I've talked to her quite a bit. Just the women's golf, especially in China and all that, is just huge. And the men I don't think have quite caught on yet. But you look at these college coaches and you can't blame them for going overseas and recruiting and getting these kids because, one, they're well-educated, they're disciplined, they don't need a full ride because whatever they don't get, their government will give to them. So why not go after these kids? You don't have to give them a full ride, they're straight-A students. I mean, I can't blame them.

Q. But a lot of them on the LPGA Tour --

BILLY MAYFAIR: Just don't even go, and I feel bad for that. I would tell anyone to at least go for two years because college, to me college was the greatest seven, eight -- no, four years of my life. It just when you're a Sun Devil or a Husky or whatever, you're that for life. There's guys out here on this tour that are Sun Devils and we all stay -- I played with Jim Carter yesterday, we were two Sun Devils.

I just think college is a great experience and I feel bad for these kids who decide to turn pro right away. At the U.S. Amateur last week I saw where a couple kids were turning pro right after the tournament if they didn't get to the semis. College is great and you only have four years of it. This tour isn't going anywhere, it's just getting bigger and bigger and better and it's not going anywhere. I feel bad for the kids who decide not to go to college because I think they're missing out on something in life. And I think when they get out here and they turn 30, 35, I think they miss it, too, a little bit. It's just, it's a great time of your life. You get to play golf, you get to go to school, you learn about life, you grow up, you're away from your parents.