

May 28, 2014

the Memorial  Tournament

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An Interview With:

JACK NICKLAUS

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome Mr. Jack Nicklaus, the host of the Memorial Tournament. It's a pleasure to have you here with us this morning.

It's the 40th anniversary, birthday of the course this year. If you want to make some comments about how the course is looking for the week and your thoughts coming into the week, then we'll have some questions.

JACK NICKLAUS: How are you all doing? Welcome. The forecast for -- we were forecast for Presidents Cup weather yesterday and today.

And hopefully we got by yesterday. We've gotten by half of today. Let's see if we can get by through the rest of today and on to hopefully a good week's weather.

Just talked about this is the 40th anniversary this week of the opening of the golf course. It's kind of amazing, 40 years, it seems like a long time. And, frankly, it is.

But the golf course has done well. The tournament's in its 39th playing, and I think it's done well.

The golf course, after the Presidents Cup last year, was -- I think Paul Latshaw is back there, the superintendent. Paul will tell you it was a mess. And that mess is now pretty darned good.

Paul and his crew have done a great job bringing the golf course back. I think he had 15 truckloads of sod and had to regrass about -- with seed about 30 acres of ground, and winter set in immediately so nothing germinated. So everything had to happen this spring.

And I think without the last two weeks, we probably would have had a hard time. I was up here less than a month ago, and there wasn't a leaf on a tree. And it's just absolutely went from spring to summer.

And the golf course is looking, as I said, really, really, really good. I played over the

weekend and I was amazed at how good it was. It was just perfect.

So I guess you've talked to Annika a few minutes ago. We're delighted to have Annika here this year. And she's not only a great player, but she's a great gal.

And I got to know her quite a bit with trying to secure the Olympics for -- golf for the Olympics and also trying to work on the golf course to try to -- for the Olympics, which we got -- we didn't get, but I got to know her, and she's a heck of a girl and smart girl and one that I gained a lot of respect and admiration for from those visits.

What else can we talk about? What do you want to talk about?

Q. Jack, when was the last time you actually played this course?

JACK NICKLAUS: I said I played it this weekend.

Q. Oh, okay. Came in late.

JACK NICKLAUS: Saturday and Sunday.

Q. How is your game?

JACK NICKLAUS: Terrible. I play the members tees right now. I can't even think about looking back to the back tees. And I threw my 95-mile-an-hour clubhead speed at it, and the ball just looks like it has clubhead -- or has a headcover on the club.

I haven't played too badly. I play probably, oh, I don't know, probably 15 times a year. And I played two days, shot 75, 74, which wasn't terrible. But I holed every putt I looked at. Meaning that I finished every hole.

(Laughter).

But that's about it. I don't play very well. I guess 75, 74 is not too bad. But it's not from 6500 yards or 6600 yards, not 7300 yards.

Q. Are you peaking for the Big Cedar Lodge Legends of Golf?

JACK NICKLAUS: I'm peaking. I'm peaking real quick. Gary kept saying he couldn't

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come back. And I said, Great, great, that's terrific. We won't be able to play. Maybe I can work it out. Don't worry about it, Gary. Don't worry about it. It's okay.

Gary said, I think I'm going to be able to work it out. I said, Gary, really, don't go out of your way to do that.

And he came back. He said, I got it worked out. I'm going to come back and play. I said, Oh, great, I gotta go play golf again. I don't like to -- my golf is not exactly for public consumption very often.

But we'll have a good time. I laugh about that with Gary because I kid him about it all the time. But we'll have a good time. We'll have fun.

Q. Jack, we all know how Tiger targeted your major victory total. How much, if at all, did you key in on Walter Hagen's total when you were playing?

JACK NICKLAUS: I don't have a clue what Walter Hagen won. I was clued on Bobby Jones' record, not Hagen's.

Q. It's been written that your father saw Hagen play in the Ryder Cup and at the first tee watched a waiter come out of the clubhouse bearing a martini that he then drank before he teed off. Is that a true story?

JACK NICKLAUS: Don't know about that story. My dad was 18 when the Ryder Cup was here, and he came to the club -- and he sort of parted his hair pretty much in the middle, a little bit like Jones. And he was walking up in the parking lot, and somebody said, Oh, Mr. Jones, come on in. And they escorted him in. Thought he was Bob Jones, and they escorted him into the clubhouse.

My dad didn't say anything; he just went right on into the clubhouse.

(Laughter).

I don't know anything about the Hagen part because I never heard anything about it.

But my dad was a big Jones fan and so forth. Never said much about Hagen. That doesn't mean that he didn't watch Hagen. I'm sure he did.

He was here in -- he came and watched Jones when he was only 12 years old, but he watched Jones win here in '13, and then he came in -- in the Ryder Cup in '31.

Q. Jack, you talked about the preparations for the golf course this year. Wonder if you could maybe take us back to 1976 and first Memorial, the excitement and

nervousness you had for preparation for the golf course and the tournament and really just getting this off the ground?

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, back in those days I was pretty much chief cook and bottlewasher. I sort of was involved in everything. And, I mean, I know that the boys and the caddie for me -- Angelo, I guess, was caddying for me back then, but they had a caddie jacket on, and by the end of the day Angelo's jacket would be filled with cigarette butts and paper. Anything I found on the golf course I picked up and we put in his pocket. And I just wanted to have a clean golf course.

The golf course was considerably shorter than it is now, but also the greens were considerably smaller than they are now. We've enlarged -- well, let's see -- not that many, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, that we've enlarged; the rest of them are the same.

The golf course back then was poa annua-free. It was so young. Poa annua has always been a hard thing. We used to cut the greens back then. It's a different measurement than they have today. But we used to cut it at 5/32s. I think that's right. Would that be that right, Paul? Or 5/64s maybe. You can't go back to the U.S. system. You're on metric now, huh?

PAUL LATSHAW: Basically the numerator divided by the denominator.

JACK NICKLAUS: I don't know. But I think we had -- trying to think. Used to cut the greens at 3/16s, and then they starting going 5/32s, and I think we ended up at -- I think we were 5/64s, I think. Is that what I said? Or 7/64s. 5/64s. We were way lower than anybody else cutting them.

I remember in the early years -- I think it was probably our third tournament. Ed Etchells was our superintendent, and I kept telling Ed, Ed, you've got to have a little reserve in the greens. I said, You can't get the things to where if we have a day that we're not expecting that you can't survive it.

I think it was '79. And I remember I shot 79 the last round. And I think -- I'm not sure, I think Watson might have won that year. I'm not sure. Did he win in '79? But the greens got to a little over 17 on Sunday. They were impossible. And everybody squawked bloody murder and everything else. I said, Ed -- we had a high dry sky with wind, and, boy, it was brutal.

We never did that again.

Q. I'd like to get your thoughts if I can on Adam Scott's performance last week, given there were people talking about him sort of backing into No. 1. If you could quantify how impressive you think that was?

JACK NICKLAUS: I never watched any of last week. I don't know anything about the golf. But obviously he won the golf tournament. I don't think he was expecting to play last week.

I think he sort of at the last minute decided to play. And I talked to him earlier. He said, I just didn't want to spend two weeks at home, so I decided to go play.

And I think that's great that he did. World's No. 1 goes out first time to go out and play and goes out and wins. I think he solidified his position pretty good with that. Pretty impressive win.

Q. Jack, there's a lot of focus on Phil Mickelson going into the Open this year after his win at Muirfield, he's now got a chance for the career grand slam, been close to the Open so many times, U.S. Open. Can you recall when you achieved the career grand slam at Muirfield in '76, was there much fanfare about that? Did winning all four majors mean much?

JACK NICKLAUS: There wasn't much fanfare from my side or anybody else's. My fanfare was winning the British Open. And I never even thought much about a career grand slam. We were trying to win it in one year, not trying to win it in a bunch of years.

But I was very proud of Muirfield, obviously, in '66. It was a golf course that I really wasn't supposed to win on. It was a golf course that was very narrow. Rough was about 18 inches high right off the fairway. There was no semi rough at all.

We always kidded about that. You go in, if you hit your ball in, and you went in and tried to find it, put the bag down, you'd lose your bag. If you had a short caddie, you'd probably lose him, too.

So we just sort of always were laughing about that all week. And I hit 17 drivers all week at Muirfield, and the 17th one almost cost me the tournament, because the 15th hole -- 14th hole I played with 3-wood all week and I decided to play driver the last round and I hit it in the bunker and cost me a bogey. And I won by one.

But career grand slam, I didn't really think a whole lot about it then. I look back on it now and

there's not that many guys that have done that. But when you're 26 years old, you don't really pay much attention to that kind of stuff.

Q. In your travels around the world of late, what's your sense of the state of the game and the state of the golf business? There's a lot of discussion as usual about that, and I'm just curious what you're seeing and sensing.

JACK NICKLAUS: I think that state of tournament golf is really, really healthy. And, frankly, I'm starting to see signs that regular golf is making a recovery. We're starting to see golf courses coming back, not so much new ones yet but we're seeing a lot of the old ones that I started five, six years ago are now being finished.

Golf courses that just got done and went under, they're now coming back and we're redoing those and getting them back to play. So there's some activity in the United States. Activity around the world has actually been pretty decent.

I've got a golf course in Japan that sat for seven years, and we're finishing it now. We've got probably -- not exactly sure the number, probably between 15 and 20 golf courses under construction in China.

And we've got several -- not several, but probably three that are working in Russia. We've got not too many other parts of the world, a little bit more in southeast Asia, a little bit in Korea.

We've never done one in the Middle East, but I think we've got a couple that are about to start. Couple -- Europe is probably quieter than the United States from a design standpoint. But we are doing a few golf courses there. So you're starting to see a little bit of that. But I'm starting to see the whole economics of the game of golf starting to increase again.

People are starting to play more rounds. They're spending more money at a lot of the clubs. The clubs are not struggling like they were three, four years ago, so I think we've made a turnaround. I think we're headed in the right direction.

We just went through a bad time. The whole United States and the world went through a bad time. And hopefully we're on the other side of it.

Q. Could you talk about your fondest memories of Payne Stewart?

JACK NICKLAUS: My fondest members

of Payne Stewart? Well, Payne was -- I think Payne was a very talented player. And my main memories of Payne is always sort of fun-loving, joking, a little bit of a wiseguy at times. That was his way of fun, of having some fun.

He'd come along, always have a little needle for you and this and that, you give him a little needle back. And he liked that. Give him another needle. I think that was the game he played with everybody. I enjoyed it. I enjoy guys that have a little fun with the game and what's going on.

Obviously his win at Pinehurst, which is obviously why you're asking the question, I think was -- it was neat that he won.

Sad that -- what happened to him. One of my guys was with him, Bruce Borland, was on that flight. I remember Bruce called me that morning, and he said -- and we were helping Payne with a golf course I think he was doing, I think it was in the New Orleans area, and he asked me if one of my guys would help. I assigned Bruce to the job.

And Bruce called me, and he said he -- he was going to ride to New Orleans with me that day for something else. He said, I have an opportunity to ride with Payne to talk to him. Should I do that or meet him there? By all means, you should go with him, go talk about what you're doing.

And of course that obviously didn't turn out exactly what everybody would want. But I always liked Payne. I thought he was a very, very talented golfer.

Q. Can you talk about a time, if you had one, where you were struggling going into an event which you absolutely wanted to win, no question? And I preface this with Mickelson has struggled this year and now he's going to go into a three-week stretch where at the end is going to be Pinehurst and U.S. Open, which we all think he would desperately like to win. I wonder if you can parallel that and explain how hard that is.

JACK NICKLAUS: I think that it's always hard to target an event and win it. But that's what I did all my life, targeted the major championships. And that's what I targeted and that's what I set my schedule on. I wanted other events because I think there's nothing better for preparation than winning, and winning breeds winning.

So Phil's here this week. And when Phil saw me at Augusta, he said, I'm looking forward to Muirfield. I really got to learn the golf course during the Presidents Cup. He said, I'm really

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looking forward to it. I said, Remember what I told you last year, don't you? He said, Yeah, my resumé won't be complete until I win the Memorial. You're absolutely right. So let's start with that.

So if Phil would play well here this week and win this week, that would be something in my head, if I were playing -- you're asking about me -- if I were playing and it was in my head that I successfully set out to try to get myself prepared for the U.S. Open but also to try to win a golf tournament, that would be something that would give me a positive towards what I wanted to do.

And the -- when you're preparing for a major, and I think that's what you're driving at is that I always try to put myself in a position of being properly prepared, and as I make sure I spent enough time at the site, spent enough time learning what all the different intricacies were of the facility and the golf course and how you had to play it and what had changed from the last time I'd been there and all those things.

I remember going back to Baltusrol, won at Baltusrol in '67. I went back in 1980. And going through practice rounds about a week before the tournament, I said, Good gracious, I won on this golf course? Man, this is the toughest golf course I've ever seen. I never realized it being this long. I'm sitting there saying, Wow.

Well, I got over that obviously. By the time the week rolled around, I was properly prepared and I broke my own record.

But that's part of preparing yourself to try to play your best when you're playing, something that you're trying to get to. And if Phil's going to try to win the U.S. Open -- he's finished second I don't know how many times, several times -- six times? Has he really? Well, I guess Amy's going to send him back until he does it right.

That's what Barbara said to me at Canada. I finished second seven times at Canada, so she kept saying: I'm going to send you back until you do it right.

I never did do it right. But maybe Phil will do it right.

Q. Couple questions, but I guess Canada is a reasonable comparison. Is it hard for you to fathom how a guy could be runner-up six times and really have eight or nine chances in the last hour of a single major without ever winning it? Would you think that would be hard to psychologically tell yourself

it's coming?

JACK NICKLAUS: I had a tough time with the Canadian Open. I don't know why. I think I won it once. But it didn't happen. And that was where -- the year I had finished the tournament and Norman was behind me, and he hit it out of bounds at 17 but they took away the out-of-bounds stakes. It's true. Hit it in the parking lot, but they had taken the out-of-bounds stakes away --

Q. Which course was that?

JACK NICKLAUS: Glen Abbey.

Q. Didn't you design that?

JACK NICKLAUS: Yeah. But they put -- originally behind the 17th green they had a parking lot, and so they had out of bounds stakes. And for some reason they took out the of bounds stakes, so when he hit it over the green out of bounds, it was not there. So he got to play and he ended up beating me by one.

(Laughter).

But the thing is the British Open was another one. I finished the British Open, I think I had six or seven seconds in the British Open. I did win it obviously. But British Open, it was hard to get that final stroke in there the right way.

But Phil's a good player. And I don't know what he'll do, but we'll see.

Q. It almost sounds, though, it became almost a mental thing for you.

JACK NICKLAUS: Sure, absolutely it does. Particularly when your wife says you gotta keep going back.

(Laughter).

Barbara's back in the back.

Q. Is she nodding her head? I can't see.

JACK NICKLAUS: Yeah.

Q. And a little bit off topic, and a little following what Jeff was saying, in terms of golf growth, I'm curious how many of your grandkids play golf, not high competitive stuff, just play.

JACK NICKLAUS: A lot of them play a little bit. Gary's little boy, GT, is 11, and GT can -- he's a big kid, but GT can hit it 270. He can pop it. And he's a nice little player. But he's not playing any competition, just playing. Plays an occasional event.

Nick, the football player, Nick shoots in the 70s every time he plays. He's a good player.

Jack III now has gotten the bug to play, and he'll break 80 about half the time now. He's getting better fast.

Charlie, who I didn't know played much, told me -- he said, Hey, Peep, I played six times last week up at Rutgers. He's playing lacrosse at Rutgers. I said, You did what? He said, Yeah, I played six times that last week before I came home. I said, Well, fantastic. I said, How did you do on your finals?

(Laughter).

And Billy, Billy has been working at the Bear's Club, and Billy now -- Billy's got a beautiful -- Nan's oldest boy, he's got a beautiful golf swing.

They're all starting to play now. We tried to get them to play earlier, but that's what kids want to do. They want to play in their other sports and do other things. And more of them are starting to play.

But I think the only one competitively is probably GT. And, as I say, he's 11. He'll be the only one that I know of that will want to be a competitive golfer right now.

Q. Shifting the focus back to this weekend a little bit. I don't want this to be too tough a question; but if you had to pick one spot to sit to watch great golf that wasn't 18 green--

JACK NICKLAUS: Sit at what?

Q. Sit at one spot as a spectator, wasn't 18th green or 1 tee, where is that one spot to watch some great golf this weekend?

JACK NICKLAUS: My living room with a television set (laughter).

Q. Is that an invitation?

JACK NICKLAUS: You're more than welcome.

Q. One spot on the golf course, then?

JACK NICKLAUS: When I was captain of Ryder Cup, captain of the Presidents Cup, I'd watch a little bit on the golf course but I saw far more on a monitor someplace where I was able to pick up what all the guys were doing.

I think if -- I was doing it for a different reason because I was captain of a team, wanted to

monitor the guys and so forth. If I was going to pick a place on this golf course, I would probably -- 18's a pretty good place. You're only seeing the finish of it.

You get quite a bit of good golf around 15, 16. 15th green, 16th hole, got to the mound. Get both of those holes there. I think you get a pretty good spot -- 14 green's pretty. I love the 14th hole. I think it's a fun hole to watch and fun hole to play.

Personally, if I'm going to watch golf, I'm going to walk with it. If I'm going to watch it, I'm going to sit and watch one thing, I'm going to walk.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Annika.

JACK NICKLAUS: Barbara, where is the best place to sit here?

BARBARA NICKLAUS: I never really sat because I just followed you. (Laughter).

JACK NICKLAUS: There's your answer. 14. I like 14, too. 14 is a beautiful spot.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Annika and the Celebrity tournament. There's maybe half a dozen celebrities who can play like U.S. Open qualifier level. She's playing the same tees but she hasn't been competitive for six, seven years, is there any reason she won't or wouldn't win this tournament?

JACK NICKLAUS: I don't have a clue what you're talking about.

Q. Annika Sorenstam is playing in that Celebrity tournament at Tahoe.

JACK NICKLAUS: I don't know anything about.

Q. Do you think she should win this tournament?

JACK NICKLAUS: I don't know. I have no idea. I don't know who is playing or what's it about. I don't know anything what you're talking about.

Can she still play? Yeah, she can still play. Don't underestimate her. Women's tournament?

Q. No, celebrity men, Michael Jordan. Those types?

JACK NICKLAUS: She'll be the best play there. (Laughter).

Q. You talked about going back 40 years. Has the tournament and the golf course evolved like you envisioned so long ago?

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, we did it 40 years ago. I certainly didn't expect the golf ball to go 50 yards further. We've adapted and adjusted to that the best we can with what piece of property we had.

I think Augusta has probably done the best job of adapting to that. Because they've had the ability and financial ability to be able to do that and the space.

We've gone back -- we don't have any more room to go back -- and not necessarily do I want to go back, but I mean I think 1 now plays pretty much okay. I think number 2 plays fine with the distance it is. 3 is the shortest hole anyway. 4 is a nice par 3. 5, we're pretty much restrictive -- 5 is an easy par 5. We restrict the tee shot with a creekbed.

And 6 is plenty long enough with what it is. 7 is -- 7 doesn't play extremely difficult unless you have wind in your face, but most of the guys will probably get there, not a lot of severe penalties, not a hard hole.

8, added a little bit of length to it. I think 8 plays very nice; it's one of the most difficult holes on the golf course through the years. Actually I think second most difficult last year, if I'm not mistaken, second or third.

9 doesn't need length to be tough. 10 has got plenty of length. 11 has got plenty of length, gives you those things.

12, we've accidentally added length to 12 by creating tee space. We really didn't need to add that much up there. But 13 is perfectly adequate length-wise.

14, we never needed to add length. 15, I didn't want to add length because I wanted to keep it as potentially eagle hole.

16, they'll move the tees forward and backward there depending on the conditions on that hole. I think 16 plays very nice.

And 17 and 18 has plenty of length. We added the new tee last year at 18. And the only change I'll make after this year that I have in my head, I'll probably take about half a dozen bunkers out of the right of 18 because I don't need them anymore.

It's a drainage issue for us. And when we get rains and so forth, those wash out pretty badly on the side of that hill. But I don't need them with the new tee. And from the, whatever the blimp is, whichever blimp we have, I never liked the looks of it, looking down seeing ten bunkers on the right

side of a hole, kept adding them for a couple of guys that kept hitting the ball 50 yards from the green with their tee shot.

They're not going to hit it 50 yards to the green from the tee shot now. We don't need that.

Q. How do you think the tournament has evolved?

JACK NICKLAUS: I think the tournament has evolved very nicely. We haven't positioned ourselves to be anything more than what we are. I think we're a good tournament, certainly one of the top tournaments in the game. We haven't positioned ourselves to be a major. It's not been our goal.

Positioned ourselves to try to be a service to the game of golf, no different than what Augusta started out to do. That was sort of my guiding light to what I wanted to do.

The TOUR has its world championships. We don't fall in that category, so that's okay. And I think we do pretty well. We always have a good field. We always have a good tournament. There's always a time of the year when the guys want to play a couple of weeks before the U.S. Open.

I've always wanted weather to be part of a factor of a golf tournament, not necessarily as much rain, but as far as the variety of weather. That's why I thought the U.S. Open was at such a good time because you could have weather or not have weather.

And British Open was good for the same exact reason. Masters, the same thing. PGA doesn't get it as much. They have pretty much the same weather every year. And I think that's probably the strengths of the other three majors, because I think the weather is a big factor in them.

And I like that for -- I think we've done very well. I'm certainly not unhappy with what anything that's happened I'm very happy with where we are. And we've got a great sponsor. Nationwide has really been unbelievably supportive as a sponsor, too.

Q. We talked a little bit about Phil already. Could you go back, think of an example or two about a golfer who came in struggling but really used the Memorial to really gain momentum into the U.S. Open?

JACK NICKLAUS: Well, let's see. I don't know. I don't know if anybody's won the Memorial, went on to win the U.S. Open two weeks later. Anybody know?

Q. Tiger and Strange?

JACK NICKLAUS: Curtis win the Open in the same year? I don't know. I never thought much about it. I sort of thought we had our own tournament.

Q. Trevino has said that if you played with today's equipment, back in your prime, you would drive the ball 400 yards. Do you buy that?

JACK NICKLAUS: Oh, sure. (Laughter).

What else do you want me to say? I don't know what I would hit it. But I've shown you this before. But that money clip I've carried since 1963. That money clip was from the PGA Championship driving contest in '63 and it was 341 yards, 17 inches.

We played the PGA up here the next year at Columbus Country Club and we had the driving contest was on the fourth hole, level hole, was a little bit into the wind, after rain, I hit it 308 that day.

Under certain conditions, there's a lot of guys out here today that could hit the ball 400 yards. Not a lot. But probably a dozen, if you get the right conditions. If they had the same conditions I had when I won that driving contest at Dallas, they would hit it 400 yards in; and I might have, too.

But that was with 42-and-three-quarter-inch wood driver. It's a little different than what we use today. But I hit the ball a long way. I don't know that I would hit it any further than the guys that are long today or as long as the guys, because they're bigger than I was.

Q. And the Dallas '63 thing, wasn't there some jet lag involved, wasn't that the week after the British Open where you guys came right in?

JACK NICKLAUS: Yeah, everybody talks about changing -- they really have a very difficult time with changing equipment and takes a year to get used to new equipment and how you have to change of a golf ball and the specs and everybody specs their own golf ball and everything else.

I came off the British Open at Lytham where I lost by a shot, was playing a set of Slazenger golf clubs and Slazenger golf balls, English golf ball. Finished second, went back to Dallas, went back to my McGregor clubs and golf ball the next week.

And I haven't hit really a whole lot -- went back to Australia in the fall, used Australian Slazenger clubs and B51 golf ball down there, came back played a year after that. We switched back and forth all the time.

The small ball, incidentally, back then was probably about the length of the golf ball we had today. We hit it about 50 yards further. And that was kind of fun. I can understand why guys like to use that ball today. They can hit it 50 yards further.

Used to go to Lost Tree and practice before the British Open. And there's a lake at the end of the driving range, which I never ever reached. I'd go practice for the British Open, we used to practice on our own practice bag. Used to send Angelo on the other side of the lake to retrieve the drivers.

It was 50 yards further. And, yeah, it was fun to do that. But it does destroy your golf course.

Q. An 11-year-old girl qualified for the U.S. Women's Open?

JACK NICKLAUS: Unbelievable.

Q. Wonder how you feel about the game getting so much younger, so many good players at such a young age?

JACK NICKLAUS: I've not seen her play. That didn't even get a laugh. (Laughter) She was at the Drive, Pitch and Putt thing in Augusta. I guess she won that, I suppose, in her division. Goes out, what, 74/68, is that what she shot?

I thought that was amazing 11-year-old girl, Half Moon Bay. I don't know whether she's a little girl, big girl, I have no idea, what is she?

Q. She's DiMeglio's size.

JACK NICKLAUS: (Laughter).

Q. That wasn't that funny.

JACK NICKLAUS: Didn't think that was all that funny? But we're getting kids younger in here. I see -- I mean, Michelle Wie, I played with her when she was 13. And I never forget playing -- we played in Hawaii. And it was 308 yards to this one bunker. I took a driver, cut it a little bit to keep it short of it. She one-hopped it in the bunker at age 13. I remember that.

And Lexi Thompson, who has been terrific. You've got Lydia Ko, I have not seen play, but is quite good. And I don't know her name, an 11-year-old girl, that's pretty fantastic.

But you're getting boys, too. You're not getting them quite that young. But we're starting to see Jordan Spieth is 20 years old. At 20 years old I was trying to figure out -- I got close in the U.S. Open, but I wasn't even dreaming of competing against the pros at age 20. He's been competing for two years against them.

And you're going to have a lot of kids that way. Why, I don't know. But what was your actual question?

Q. Knowing how you love tennis, tennis has had a lot of people who were very young and flame out. Do you worry in golf that the same thing could happen?

JACK NICKLAUS: Do I worry?

Q. Well, there's so many young people.

JACK NICKLAUS: Why would I worry about it? I don't understand what the worry would be all about.

Q. Burnout, possibly.

JACK NICKLAUS: I mean, if you're good enough to play and you beat them -- all you do is have a little longer retirement.

(Laughter).

But the game is -- you play the game when you can play it. And I was pretty decent when I was younger. But I realized that I was going to burn myself out. That's why I sort of managed my schedule in such a way that I paced myself never to play too much.

I got criticism for not playing too much. But I think that -- but it allowed me to play for a long time and allowed me to keep my enthusiasm for the game and didn't burn myself out.

But if you're at 15, 16, 17 years old, you go and start playing professional golf and you start playing 40 tournaments a year, you'll burn yourself out pretty quick.

I think that's really your question. But I think it's all up to the individual, and certainly how they're really managed, whether they get help from their parents or they get help from a coach or a manager, or just themselves, that they learn how to pace themselves. I think that's very important.

Q. What you said a minute ago about 20 not really thinking about playing against these guys, you almost won a U.S. Open and probably should have won a U.S. Open when

you were 20 --

JACK NICKLAUS: Yeah, but I didn't think about being on the TOUR at age 20.

Q. Why didn't you think of that? I mean, wouldn't that week have sold you --

JACK NICKLAUS: I'm still in college.

Q. -- that you were good enough to go that day?

JACK NICKLAUS: I might have been good enough. I played probably six or seven tournaments as a -- I think my first TOUR tournament at 18, I played one. It was Firestone. I finished 12th in that tournament as an 18-year-old.

And, yeah, I played pretty good. I was only one shot out of the lead, shot 66, 67 the first two rounds. So that wasn't bad. And I played in the summertime when I was 19, I played six or seven tournaments. I did the same thing when I was 20. And I did the same thing when I was 21.

And so I had a lot of TOUR experience. Kids can't seem to do that today because they can't get access to the TOUR. And if you want to get access, you almost have to have full access and you have to really be a professional and basically have to go through a qualifying system to get there.

So the access was easy for me. It is not easy today. I suppose did I finish like -- when I was 21, I remember I was playing in Milwaukee, and I was one shot out of the lead going into the last round.

And I called Barbara that night and talked to her for about 45 minutes. I was so excited about the tournament, having a chance to win. I ended up finishing fourth the next day. But it also was my wedding anniversary, which I forgot. Talked for 45 minutes on my wedding anniversary. And it cost me a lot, I promise you.

(Laughter).

Q. I would think it might have been more tempting to --

JACK NICKLAUS: It was my first wedding anniversary. Sorry.

Q. First one?

JACK NICKLAUS: First one that I forgot.

Q. Is it the last one?

JACK NICKLAUS: Last one I forgot.

Q. If the amount of prize money were available back then as it is now, do you think it might have been more tempting to accelerate your process?

JACK NICKLAUS: Might have been. I got married pretty young. I got married when I was 20. I was selling insurance. I had probably I guess three jobs that I was working at the same time. I was working Ohio State Life Insurance Company, I was working for Parker and Co., which is a brokerage firm out of New York, and I was actually working for a slack company. As I traveled I did some slack promotion, well within amateur regulations.

So I was making -- I was making close to about 30,000 a year. That's pretty good for 20-year-old. Pretty darned good back in 1960. And I thought about playing the TOUR, you had to be probably in the top five to be making \$30,000 a year.

So money was not the issue when I turned pro. I mean, the reason I turned pro was not because of the volume of what was on the TOUR, why I turned pro is because it was my access to be able to play against the best, and I wanted to be the best at what I could be. I decided I really didn't care about being the best insurance salesman. I really wanted to be a guy who could be the best at playing golf. And the only way to do that is to play against the best. And so that was why I turned pro.

Today is a whole different deal. You've got a guy who can turn pro today and if he plays decent, he can go out make 5 million bucks on the TOUR. My first year on the TOUR, I said that -- I remember I said if I didn't win \$30,000 my first year on the TOUR I thought I would have an unsuccessful year.

And, I mean, I got Tommy Bolt and a couple of the other guys, about my third year on TOUR: Look at this young kid. What kind of estimation does he think he has? He thinks he can come out here and make \$30,000 just like that? Seriously.

But I got a lot of criticism because I thought that would be -- I ended up winning -- I won '61 I think on the TOUR, I think '64 was leading money winner that year, and then I won the world series of golf. I did all right.

But you looked at the kind of money guys made then. You didn't make them -- you didn't play golf for money then. You played golf to be

able to make a name to be able to go do outside stuff to be able -- is where you made your living.

Q. The other thing I was going to ask you, as you look at Tiger coming up on age 39, do you think winning majors for him, the greater stumbling block will be his own health or the younger growing number of --

JACK NICKLAUS: Both.

Q. What do you put more weight on, do you think?

JACK NICKLAUS: Probably his health. I think that the young players -- young players continually come on while I played. And I think that he can handle that. Incidentally, he called me this morning, which is a very, very nice call, wishing me well in the tournament, sorry he couldn't be here. And he was saying that he felt bad about not being able to be here. He said he's doing well, progressing well, and he's looking forward to getting back into the game. He misses it. I just pass that on.

Q. Did he say anything about the British Open by chance?

JACK NICKLAUS: No, he didn't say anything -- and I didn't ask him because I knew I was going to talk to you guys. I'll let him answer those questions.

I think his biggest stumbling block probably is going to be his health, and I think his health is something that he thinks he's doing very well with. If he's healthy, I think Tiger's got 10 plus years to play top-quality tournament golf.

And certainly, and I've said many times, he's got a little over 40 tournaments to play the major championships, he's only got to win five to pass my record. As good a player as he is, I don't think that should be a big deal.

But, then again, he's gotta do it plus he's also got to be healthy to be able to do it. And you're right, the last part is a factor. I mean, the first time that Tiger ever lost a tournament coming down the stretch was against Y.E. Yang where he was leading and came down. It was the first time somebody challenged him and actually beat him.

He will probably have more of those challenges because of the more young players coming along. But that's part of the game, and I think he expects that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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