



87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

An interview with:

PHIL MICKELSON

JULIUS MASON: *Phil Mickelson*, ladies and gentlemen, in at 3-under. *Phil*, let's go through your card, birdies, bogeys, and we'll go to Q & A.

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I bogeyed the 3rd hole, drove it left where you cannot drive it and had to chip out, hit a 9-iron on to 30 feet and two-putted for bogey.

Came back on 5, hit a little 9-iron after a 3-wood tee shot to three feet, made that for birdie.

Bogeyed 6, I hit a tree quickly off the tee, fell straight down. I played down 17 fairway for my second shot, hit an L-wedge from 92 yards to five feet and missed it unfortunately for bogey.

On 9, I birdied. I hit a 5-iron to about 35 feet, made that.

10, I made another birdie. I hit a 3-wood and a pitching wedge to about 35 feet, made that for birdie.

Birdied 14, made a pretty good putt there, too. I hit 3-wood, pitching wedge past the hole to about 30, 35 feet, made that for birdie.

And then two-putted the last hole after a driver, 5-iron to about 35, 40 feet.

Q. Can you tell us a little more about the shot over the trees, how high they were, whatever, on 6?

PHIL MICKELSON: I had a really pretty easy shot. The tree was really not going to affect the shot any because I left myself far enough back. It was just a good full L-wedge from 92 yards and I was able to fly it on and spin it back to about five feet. It just looked a little different.

The funny thing about that is that that drive that I hit probably would have been in the fairway, but I pulled it a touch and it clipped the tree, caught the limb and fell straight down. But there's three holes out here where my fade is very difficult to hit. I come very close to the trees, and that was one of

them, and unfortunately I pulled it just a slight bit and caught the limbs.

Q. What are the three holes?

PHIL MICKELSON: Let's see, that was hole No. 6, 5 is one of them, and 15, those are very difficult. It's not very difficult, it's just that I'm going to come very close to those trees. It sets up for a left-to-right shot and I'm trying to play it a little right-to-left.

Q. I think I heard you say out there that you can't expect obviously to make three 35-footers in a round obviously, but how good does it feel after grinding this summer to come out here in the first round and make three 35-footers?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I have a little bit different feeling heading into this tournament than I've had in some of the others. I feel like I had three really good weeks to get some good work done, and I feel a lot more confident in my game than I did heading into the other majors. And as I said earlier in the week, I really want to put everything I have into finishing off the year right here at the *PGA*.

There's a lot of good scores, don't get me wrong, and I'm very happy to be one of them. But it feels a little bit different. It doesn't feel -- it wasn't quite as stressful a round. I was able to keep the ball in play and hit a lot of greens in regulation and was able to make a few putts.

Q. Some of those earlier putts weren't dropping, and those two long birdie putts, how much of --

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, it was obviously felt great to make those two putts. If you give yourself enough chances here, the greens are rolling so well that you will make a couple, you just have to be patient because there's a lot of pin placements that it's tough to get close to, and you're trying to play a little bit away from the pin to see if you can make a longer one, and I was able to make a couple of those. The one at 9 was nice because I was able to turn at even par and that

gave me a little bit of momentum going into the back side.

Q. I know that 6 didn't finish up the way you would like by missing that putt, but would you talk about waiting for the gallery and the fist pumps and the back slaps and everything else, a little *Irwin*-esque there.

PHIL MICKELSON: I just think the people here are awesome to play in front of and they support so many great championships that I really enjoy coming here and playing. That was kind of cool there, going through the gallery after hitting right over them. It was a fun hole.

Q. Three weeks of preparation and why it was harder to do that before the other majors than it was before this major?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I think that that's a good question. Tough to really give you a direct answer. I would just say that I felt a lot better about my game after spending some time working on it, as well as a couple of good pointers that I picked up from the head pro here, Doug **Stephen**, and I was able to put that to good use today. I just feel a lot more confident with where the golf ball is going and being able to keep it in play.

Q. Could you talk a little bit more about the value of patience on this golf course?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, patience is important in every major championship because the way the setup is, you just can't force things, you've got to let it happen.

A lot of times you've got to wait until you make a 35-footer for birdie. It's very difficult to get the ball close to some of these pins. If you try to force it, you're going to end up making bogeys. You know, that's going to happen out here. You're going to make some bogeys, but it doesn't mean -- you'll make some birdies, but you just may not birdie the next hole, it may be five or six holes from now.

Q. It seems like statistically the old wrist-ticking *Phil* won as often on Tour as the new strategic *Phil*. One, do you agree with that, and two, do you think we undervalue how effective you were as a player in that other personality?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I don't really agree with what you're saying in that there's two different players. I still feel like the same player. I'm trying to play as aggressive as I can, and this week it just so happens that I have to take about 20, 25 yards off my tee shot. I'm trying to hit a soft

cut to get the ball to stay in the fairway so I can be more aggressive into the pins, so that I can take the short irons and attack the pins. I may not get it five feet or three feet, it may be 25 feet, but that might be as aggressive as I can get at the hole.

I'm still trying to find a way to get it as close to the pin and play as attacking a style golf as I can. I find that this week by taking a little something off my driver and hitting a softer cut, getting it to not run as much in the fairways, I'm able to be much more aggressive into the greens.

Q. There are a lot of great names near the top of a tightly-packed leaderboard, but one conspicuous absentee is *Tiger Woods*. I wonder what you think of *Tiger* shooting a 75 today and whether he has a chance to get back in it?

PHIL MICKELSON: If you're looking for me to shed a tear, it's not going to happen (laughter). But I know or I believe, as I think we all do, that come Sunday his name will find its way up on top there. It'll be tough for us to keep him back. Fortunately a lot of guys got off to a good start.

Q. Can you elaborate a little bit on the tips that you said Doug gave you this morning? And is this the most relaxed and maybe comfortable you've been going into a major this year?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, he told me to keep my head down and my right arm straight (laughter). No, I tried to just pick up a little bit of tidbits on some of the greens, how some greens break more than it looks and maybe hit those putts or what have you, and he was very helpful, and I forget the second part of your question.

Q. Is this the most relaxed and comfortable you've been going into a major this year?

PHIL MICKELSON: This year, yes. I felt very confident last year going into the majors. I feel similarly this week in that the biggest difference is I feel like I know which way my misses are going to be with each club. I struggled a little bit this year missing it both ways in the majors, and the penalty for a miss is so great that I couldn't play effectively doing that.

Q. In taking 20 to 25 yards off your tee shots, can you explain how you do that? Do you restrict your back swing, hold the club differently, line up at the ball differently or what?

PHIL MICKELSON: No, I just hit a big fade. It creates more backspin, it creates a floatier rising shot and it comes into the fairway a lot softer as opposed to trying to draw it or trying to launch it a little bit higher with less spin. I just hit a softer cut.

Q. On those holes that don't set up perfectly for that fade, you don't try to hit the draw there because you do want to hit that soft cut into the fairway?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, it's just three shots throughout the round, and I'd rather not fight it. I'll try to hit it as straight as I can, but I don't want to try to turn one over if I don't have to.

Q. Did you practice yesterday? I know it wasn't here, but why did you get away? Does that kind of help you to get away the day before the tournament starts?

PHIL MICKELSON: It does, and I had a chance to go up to *Pine Valley*, which I just love every chance I get to go play that golf course, so I spent some time up there. It was a great place to prepare.

Q. Did you think that wearing a hat would generate so much interest from the gallery all day?

PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't, but it's been pretty cool.

Q. Given what's transpired since *Augusta* last year, winning here, winning a second major now, is that as important for you right now as winning the first one was a year ago?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, it's a little premature for me to answer that question. I don't like to look that far ahead. There's a lot of work to be done and there's a lot of guys that are 3-under, 2-under, 1-under. I'd rather just keep it more in today's mode.

Q. How often have you gone to just one shot like this, be it in a major or any other time, and when was the last time you stuck strictly to --

PHIL MICKELSON: The last time I did it was last year's *Masters*, I hit every shot right-to-left. When I'd get to the 15th hole and try to turn it over I'd miss that fairway every time left. I decided this week when I get to a couple holes where I have to draw it, I'm not going to do it, I'll hit it straight and hopefully catch the left side of the fairway.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks for coming down, *Phil*.

PHIL MICKELSON: Thanks, guys.
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