



87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

An interview with:

STUART APPLEBY

JULIUS MASON: *Stuart Appleby*, ladies and gentlemen, after the first round of the 87th *PGA Championship* in at 3-under. Let's go through your card, birdies and bogeys is all we need right now, and we'll go to Q & A.

STUART APPLEBY: First hole, ordinary drive, ordinary second shot, ordinary third shot, and managed to make about a nine-footer on 1. That was my second nine, my first hole, for a birdie.

I hit a great shot into 5 to about -- out of the left rough, which I hit it wide enough where it was okay, made a 3 for birdie. Then 6, hit it in the right rough off the tee, drew a good lie, hit it to 12 feet for a birdie.

Bogeyed 8 after getting lucky in the rough and dropping a shot there, hitting it over the green, not getting up-and-down.

10 being my first nine, got away with a great up-and-down on 10 after an ordinary drive in the left rough.

Had a birdie on 12, long par 3 as every par 3 is out here, had about a 20-footer down the hill for a 2.

And 16, par 3, I holed about a 30-foot putt that came back left, missed a really good opportunity on 17 and 2-putted from 20 feet on 18.

Q. Did you read the sheet where they tell you about the local rules and all that stuff this year?

STUART APPLEBY: No comment (laughter).

Q. That's illuminating.

STUART APPLEBY: There must be a problem, I can't hear what you're saying (laughter).

Q. I think you said you had a 7-wood in your bag. Did you use it at all today?

STUART APPLEBY: I used it on 1, I think was the only time I used it, in the rough for second shots.

Yeah, it's an interesting club. I don't look forward to using it. I'd rather use irons in the fairway. But if so, it's certainly much handier than hacking it out 50 yards down the fairway. It has got the ability to hit it 150 to 200 yards. Some greens you can't run the ball up here, so it's going to be sometimes weighing up whether you want to be close or whether you want to be in the fairway from 100 yards or closer versus 30 yards or 50.

Q. Your caddie is a New Jersey resident. Just wondering if you could recount how you first started working with him and if you could describe your relationship with him.

STUART APPLEBY: What are we on, the Oprah show, is it (laughter)? We met in a bar (laughter). Red Room was it called? It was in 1997. I'm not exactly sure the first time we met officially, but I know he started working for me in '97 at the start of the year and basically has been on the bag ever since then. So that's quite a long time in caddying circles, to be with one player for that long.

If he plays his cards right, the only thing that's going to pull us apart is his old age.

Q. Stuart, as seemingly benign as the conditions were today, so far 67 is the best score. I'm just wondering if that surprises you at all and how you think that bodes for how the rest of the week is going to play out?

STUART APPLEBY: I'm not too surprised. The greens generally are not that quick. They're not lightning. They're generally very consistent with their slope. Fairways haven't got too firm or too firm yet, and the wind wasn't blowing much. So 3-under, you know, that's about what you'd expect. I don't think you'd expect any 6 or 7s and you wouldn't expect even par to be leading.

The course has potential to get more difficult, but the greens generally are very round, so there's not many pins that can hide behind bunkers. Everything is pretty visible from the

fairway, unusual for a lot of the courses we play, even in normal tournaments.

The greens are interesting; they're not going to handle the heat very well. They're going to dry and get a bit stressed so they have to water them which is going to keep them soft where the ball can stop. I think 3-under is very normal, even par. If the score gets to even par, it's going to have to dry out a bit.

Q. You said your putting has been driving you nuts this year. Have you changed anything this week? And if not, how do you explain the turn-around today?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, I've been really frustrated with my putting for a long time, just been hitting the ball -- swinging it good enough, but when you don't putt good enough, sometimes that just wears out your swing, too. That's sort of a chasing your tail type of thing.

Last week I putted terrible. I mean, you're just not even looking forward to hitting a putt at all, whether it's a two-footer or one-footer or a 40-footer. You don't get any excitement when you don't know where the ball is going to go when you hit it, as you probably know (laughter). I was almost going to break my putter in half this week, and I thought, no, I'm not that type of player, not yet anyways. I looked at my putter and the loft and the lie wasn't right, so I fixed that, and the putter looked a bit better. Then I thought, I'm going to add another inch to it, so I added an inch to it and that changed my setup, and then I started my practice strokes beside the ball, just overhauled it. Nothing was really wrong with the stroke, but I think I was getting so sort of confused with my putting that there was no rhythm and flow to it, nothing natural, and when I can get that way I'm a good putter, so I just sort of do practice strokes beside the ball and that gives me a good feel for the stroke I'm going to hit ten seconds later. Today felt better with the new putter. Hopefully that turns into just one inch instead of a foot like *Peter Senior*.

Q. What changes did make to the loft and lie?

STUART APPLEBY: It's pretty hard, but somehow it got bent somewhere. Fortunately now it seems to be bending quite easy, so I've got to keep an eye on it. Lengthening it, changing my set up and changing my routine has got me a bit fresher with what needs to be done, and I felt relaxed out there with my putter, whereas I haven't been -- I think Hawaii was the best I putted, the rest of the year has just been a hockey match.

Q. Does one round like that do much for your confidence, or is it too little to say?

STUART APPLEBY: It's my first competition round with anything like that. I've never had a routine like that in as long as I've ever played golf, so it's something new. I'd love to get more competition rounds with it. I think it's the real thing, I think it's got a future, and I look forward to working with it as opposed to what it was last week when I wasn't looking forward to working with anything.

Q. There are a lot of good names near the top of that leaderboard but one name that's missing is *Tiger Woods*. I'm just wondering what you think of *Tiger* shooting a 75 today and what his chances are to get back into this competition?

STUART APPLEBY: I think there's plenty of guys happy to see him down the leaderboard for a change. I don't think you're going to get some "oh, I'm so sorry, what a pity." You guys can write about someone else for a change. I'm not concerned. I don't think anyone here is, and I'm sure you'll see a rebounding round from him tomorrow or over the weekend.

Q. A lot of guys, like let's say, for instance, *Tiger*, you know, he talks about the -- the beginning of the year he talks about majors, and he wins some tournaments along the way, seems quite happy, but he really is just thinking about majors. Do you find yourself as a player that thinks that way, and is it important to you to win a major? Do you look at your career and go, "I really want to win a major to validate who I am as a golfer"?

STUART APPLEBY: I think that's a reasonable question. I think there's many players or there will be players that look back and go "I really feel like that's something I should have done." If you asked 50 players that maybe were close or -- maybe most of them would say that, no doubt about that. It's something you want to do; it's the ultimate. Yes, like *Tiger* wins tournaments along the way, and I'd like to do something like that, win a bunch of tournaments because the more you win, the more you develop the experience and knowledge of what needs to be done.

Yeah, I wish it was as simple as controlling it. *Tiger* has won ten tournaments, but I'm sure he's won how many more than that, 40 or something in total, 50, whatever. So the ratio is not as good to win your majors, but ultimately you

walk away -- you wouldn't want to walk away and say "I won one" and that's all you did. I think that would be sort of sad, but at the same time you don't want to win 10 or 20 or whatever and not have won. You want to have a rounded career, and I think a rounded career for a good player is definitely contending and winning majors.

Q. Is that for you yourself?

STUART APPLEBY: Oh, definitely. I think there's a lot of players in that category.

Q. Just to follow up on that, Stuart, what is your week like during a major? Is it much different than any other part of that week for you?

STUART APPLEBY: Say that again.

Q. What is a major week like for you?

STUART APPLEBY: Well, I guess **Augusta** is the only one where you sort of-- I guess you know exactly what's going on because it's the same course every year. Every other course is very different. **British Open** can vary so much from town to town, we go from **St. Andrews**, where we were now, just a beautiful town, we're moving to liver pool next year and I'm sure some people know that **Liverpool** is a bit different than **St. Andrews**. Each major has its own little thing, and this is the first time I've been up in Jersey.

They're each a little bit different, but some guys stay at the hotel, some guys rent houses. It's a little -- it's an event in itself being away from actually the golf course and the driving range. They're very unique and very different from tournament to tournament, but the preparation is very similar.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you for coming down, Stuart.

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