



87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

An Interview With:

STEVE ELKINGTON

JULIUS MASON: *Steve Elkington*, ladies and gentlemen, 1995 *PGA Champion*, and at 2-under after the first round of the 87th *PGA Championship*.

Welcome to the media center interview room. Let's go through your card, birdies, bogeys, and we'll go to Q & A.

STEVE ELKINGTON: I had a dream start today. I birdied 2, 3 and 4. Do you want me to give you the shots?

I parred 1.

2, hit a 2-iron and 8-iron about four feet, made birdie.

3 is the hardest hole out there. Hit a drive and a 6-iron about 20 feet, made birdie.

4, I hit a 5-iron about 15 feet. So that was 3-under through four holes.

5, driver, 7-iron just on the back, two-putt.

6, driver, 6-iron on the back, two putts.

7, driver, 6-iron just over the back, chipped up, made par.

8, driver, wedge, two-putt, 20 feet.

9 was a 4-iron, two-putt, 20 feet.

10, driver, 9-iron, two-putt, 20 feet.

11, driver, 8-iron, 20 feet, two-putt.

12, hit a 4-iron just in the fringe, two-putted.

13 I drove to the right. I hit a bad shot over in the trees. Got a pretty good break, had a bad lie, hit a punch shot with a 50 iron, just short of the green, chipped up and made a four-footer for par.

14, driver, 5-iron, 15 feet.

15, driver, 8-iron to the fringe, had an awkward lie, went 25 feet by, bogey.

16, right it short and right of the green, chipped it to about four feet, missed a short putt.

17, went straight to the rough, was in the bunker short, got out, made my par, hit about a three-foot putt.

18, hit a great drive, 8-iron short of the green and chipped up and made the putt.

Q. Obviously ten years ago you won this and now here we're sitting here. It's been obviously quite a struggle for you with a lot of injuries and a lot of down sides over the last ten years. Can you reflect on that and whether you thought at any point that you could ever get back to sitting in here at a PGA?

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, I've had a lot of good things happen to me in the last ten years, a lot of good golf, as well.

I've had a few things happen, but I've always played well when I didn't have anything wrong with me. What a shock. (Laughter). I haven't had any problems for ages. I got over -- I had shoulder surgery a couple years ago, but I haven't had anything -- I have no physical problems at all, so I can't quite answer your question specifically other than --

Q. I suppose in terms of the allergies --

STEVE ELKINGTON: I've got all that under control.

Q. So the allergies, how long has it been since you've had those?

STEVE ELKINGTON: I've made so many changes over the years to get healthier. So I haven't had really any problems for years, basically. Last year was a good year health-wise, as well. I was just recovering from my shoulder. It took a long time for me.

Q. I suppose what I'm getting to is along the whole way, even though you dropped out of the Top 10, you got down in the rankings a bit, you yourself always had the belief in yourself as a golfer that you'd be back at a high level?

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, I've played a lot of my career up in this echelon, so I don't know why I wouldn't think that. I mean, I played the Tour 18 years, and, I played 15 of them pretty high up there, so I don't know why I wouldn't be up there again if I was feeling well.

Q. Ben Curtis said he thought the first seven holes were the test of the golf course. Did you find that?

STEVE ELKINGTON: Yeah, it was a very difficult course to read or to get used to in the regard that you start out so tough. 1 is very hard, 3 is very hard, 4 is an intimidating shot, 6, 7, and then it backs off a little bit.

We were talking today in our group, it feels like by the time you get to the turn, it feels like you've played about 12 holes. It's really a long way out to that point of the golf course, and you cover a fair amount of territory to be out there.

And then the golf course is pretty, what I would call, what we're more used to as far as length holes. We're not quite used to the length of 1 and 3. And then you have the massive hole, No. 17, and then 18 is okay.

But it's a hard course to get a feel for because you never play a par 5, and then you play two of them at the end.

Q. You said on Tuesday that the course was already drying out. Is it continuing to do that, and does that bring more players into the mix?

STEVE ELKINGTON: Yeah, the course is getting much better. It's -- not fast in the fairways. The greens are firming up. For example, I hit a really good drive in the practice round on No. 1 and had a 3-iron. Today I had a 6-iron from almost the same spot. The air is warmer and the ball is flying further.

We did get a bit of breeze today, as well, which is really drying the course out nice.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks for coming down, Steve.

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