



87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2005

An Interview With:

PHIL MICKELSON

JULIUS MASON: *Phil Mickelson* ladies and gentlemen, atop the leaderboard at the **87th PGA Championship** at 8-under.

Phil, if you don't mind, let's go through the card, birdies, bogeys and we'll go to Q&A, please.

PHIL MICKELSON: I started on 11 with a 3-wood, 9-iron to ten feet and made it for birdie.

On 13, I hit 3-wood in the left bunker, 9-iron to three feet and made it for birdie.

On 14, I hit driver in the left rough, wedge, hit a pitching wedge to 12 feet, made it for birdie.

I bogeyed 16. I hit a 5-iron in the bunker just right of the green. Chipped out to five feet and missed it.

Birdied 17. I hit driver, 4-wood, gap wedge from 100 to about 15 feet and made it for birdie.

18, I hit driver, 4-iron to 20 feet and made it for birdie.

On 1, I hit driver in the left rough.

Q. Eagle?

PHIL MICKELSON: You're right, sorry. On No. 1, I hit driver in the left rough, 8-iron short right, fluffed a chip short of the green. Chipped on 25 feet and 2-putted for double.

On 3, I hit a driver, 7-iron to 40 feet and made it for birdie.

On 5, I hit a 3-wood, 8-iron to six feet, made it for birdie.

On 6, I hit driver in the right rough, hit a 6-iron short of the green about 50 yards and chipped up to 25 feet and missed it for bogey.

And I birdied 8 with a driver off the tee and a gap wedge to about 25 feet and made it for birdie.

JULIUS MASON: Questions, folks.

Q. Two-part question, first of all how do you like your position now, is that what you

had envisioned coming in? And second thing, the atmosphere on 4 seemed to be a little *Bethpagesque*, just comment on that.

PHIL MICKELSON: I love the feel that the people here provide, the way they support this tournament is awesome. I love coming out and playing in front of everybody here. It is just an amazing feeling from a players point of view to have the support the way they support all of the players. It's just an incredible feeling.

Heading into this week, I felt very confident that I was getting some good work done and came into this tournament with a lot more confidence. Had some good work with my short game and long game and felt confident heading in. I'm feeling confident after the first two rounds, certainly there's a lot of golf left.

Q. Today especially, every time you made a mistake, you answered it one or two holes later with birdie, eagle, something like that. Just knowing birdies are out there on the course, you can forget about what happened?

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that's probably been the thing I was most proud of about today's round, was that on this course, everybody is going to make mistakes, but sometimes it's hard to forget about it and let it go. After I made a double on 1, I was able to be patient and let it go and came back with birdies on 3 and 5. When I bogeyed 6, I was able to let it go and come back with a birdie on 8. So I think that was probably the thing that I was most pleased with was the way I was able to let go of some bad shots and forget about it and move on.

Q. Obviously playing a lot of majors, the preparation you spend on your short game and hitting different shots, how would you describe the way you prepared for this major? Did you do things different? How much time did you spend out here?

PHIL MICKELSON: I have done the same thing that I have done in the three previous majors this year as I did the four majors last year.

I feel like I had some good work done. But

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the difference was the three weeks after the **British**, I was able to assess some areas of my game that I needed to work on and improve, and I had enough time to do that. With the help of **Dave Pelz** and **Rick Smith**, I was able to get my short game and long game pretty sharp heading into this week.

Q. Did you feel that especially after last year, you had such a great season in the majors, do you feel this year at all, with all of Tiger's dominance, you've sort of been written off by the fans and the press at all?

PHIL MICKELSON: I haven't really thought about it. I think that my only focus right now is that this is the last major championship this year, and I want to put everything I have into this one event.

I've worked hard the last three weeks to try to give this my best shot, because I feel, again, we've got a long ways between majors, and I want to give this everything I have. Fortunately, I've played well the first two days, there's a lot of golf left but I'm entering the final two rounds with a lot more confidence than I've had in a while.

Q. How would you compare the speed and the condition of the greens today, the way they were rolling to yesterday?

PHIL MICKELSON: I thought they were slightly faster today than they were yesterday. I thought that if you picked your spots, you could be aggressive. I had a 15-footer on the second hole for birdie, and it wasn't the spot to be aggressive. I lagged it up there a foot short of the hole and tapped in. It's normally 15 feet, you should make it but it wasn't a putt -- my playing partners both ran it six feet by and 3-putted. I came back on the eighth hole and left myself an uphill putt from 25 feet and I was able to be aggressive and make it. If you pick your spots and be aggressive you can make some birdies, but if you put it on the wrong spot of the green, you've got to be careful because the greens are very fast and sometimes you're better off not even trying to make it and just 2-putt.

Q. As well as you've hit the cut shot this week and as well as you hit it in the Masters last year, the thought occurs, do you not use it as much as you should, or do you not execute it always as well as you should?

PHIL MICKELSON: That's probably a question I should answer later after the week is over. Right now I just want to hit that cut shot which I think is most effective here because the fairway is drying out I want the ball to come in

softer. I felt heading into this week that was the shot that would be most effective.

Now, you bring up great questions, but probably shouldn't answer them until after the end of the week.

Q. Back to your patience, is that the big difference so far the first two rounds? It seems like in the British, the other three majors this year, when you make a charge, you make a mistake and lose all of your momentum and that has not happened so far. Is that different?

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that's certainly what happened, but I thought the reason that happened was I was a little unsure on which direction I may have missed the ball and I brought both sides of trouble into play.

This course I'm trying to take out half the trouble, and if I'm able to do that, I don't have to worry about the other half and that's made it a lot less stressful.

Q. The relationship of the Metropolitan galleries really took off early in the week at Bethpage. Did you do anything differently that week with the press or on the golf course, and have you ever analyzed why it took off the way it took off?

PHIL MICKELSON: I've never analyzed it. I just know that it feels great and I love playing here. I look forward to coming back to this area every year, and I'd love to win both major championships here. It's a tremendous place to play. There are tremendous golf courses, people are tremendous the way they support the tournament, great food, my wife and my kids love the shopping, it's an amazing feeling on the golf course from a players point of view to be able to feel that type of support. It's awesome.

Q. Even the best golfers can't control weather, is there anything you do differently for diet and exercise for the incredible heat of the next couple of days, different than you do otherwise?

PHIL MICKELSON: Not really. I do drink a lot more water. I think that it's very easy to get dehydrated. You don't want to drink any sodas and iced tea because they will actually dehydrate you a little bit. So I try to drink just water. But other than that, not really.

Q. The support that you get from the local fans, what role does it play, if any, in your confidence; it's kind of been growing on you.

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PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't hear you.

Q. The support of the fans, what role does that play in your confidence when you're on the course, if any?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, it just feels great. It just feels great to be able to play in front of people that treat the players so well. It's just a great feeling.

Q. Right now you have a four-shot lead and I don't know what it's going to be at the end of the day, but you should obviously be in front. Does that affect your approach going into tomorrow or how do you go into tomorrow?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I don't think that it does. I don't think that the way I'll plan on playing the golf course is any different being ahead as it would be being behind. I think that you have to take what the course gives you. There are holes you can be aggressive on, and if that's the case I will try and make birdies; and if there's some holes that you can't where the pins are tucked and the greens get firm or what-have-you, I'll play for par. It's not as though I'm trying to play conservative or run away. I'm just trying to take what the course gives me.

Q. What was your assessment after the *British Open* on what exactly you needed to work on and tone up?

PHIL MICKELSON: That's a really good question and I don't want to get into details right now. I feel like I've gotten some good work done and I'm playing a little bit different, with a lot more confidence.

Q. You said you had 4-iron into 18, wondering what the distance was.

PHIL MICKELSON: I had 222 to the hole, but only 199 to carry the front which was really the yardage that I was after. It was probably a little bit -- I probably could have gotten five there, but I wanted to hit more of a rounded cut shot, and I was -- that's why I went with one more club.

Q. With regard to this cutoff the tee, how much distance does that take away with you, and who came up with that before *The Masters*, was it Rick or a combination of you and Rick?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, the cut shot at the Masters is lightly different because I'm going at it a lot harder and I'm trying to hit it a lot farther. This cut shot looks similar, it's just that I'm trying to

get the ball to come in dead. It knocks about 20, 25 yards off the tee shot and I'm trying to get the ball to stop rolling in the fairway because it just seems to roll through. The softer I can bring it in, the more fairways that I will hit. Or, if I do miss it, it will stay closer to the fairway and won't get as far off into trouble.

Q. 6, that's not a good-look tee shot for you because of that; correct?

PHIL MICKELSON: It's a tough shot, it's a tough shot for both players, right or left-handed, but for me hitting a cut, I'm going to come very close to those trees on the right, as I did yesterday, I hit it yesterday and I came close today. But it's just the way I'm going to play the hole.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you, Phil.
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